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S U B M I S S I O N
T O T H E
R I G H T E O U S N E S S O F G O D:
O R T H E
N E C E S S I T Y
O F

Trusting to a better Righteousness
than O U R O W N.

Opened and defended, in a plain Practical
Discourse upon Rom. x. 3.

B Y
B E N J A M I N J E N K S,
L A T E R E C T O R O F H A R L E Y I N
S H R O P S H I R E.

Recommended by the late Mr HERVEY.

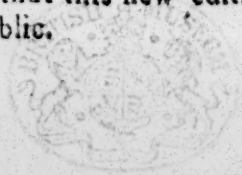
G L A S G O W:
P R I N T E D A N D S O L D B Y R. C H A P M A N
A N D A. D U N C A N.

M D C C L X X V.

RECOMMENDATION.

THE late Rev. Mr JAMES HERVEY, in his Meditations, Vol. I. pag. 271, speaking of the Righteousness of God, says, " This, and several other hints, interspersed in the two volumes, refer to the active and passive righteousness of Christ, imputed to believers, for their justification. Which, in the opinion of many great expositors, is the mystical and the most sublime meaning of the ' wedding-garment,' so emphatically and forcibly recommended by the Teacher sent from God, Matth. xxii. 11. A doctrine, which some of those who honour my Meditations with a perusal, probably may not receive with much, if any, approbation. I hope, the whole performance will not be cashiered for one difference in sentiment. And I beg that the sentiment itself may not hastily be rejected, without a serious hearing. For I have the pleasure of being intimately acquainted with a gentleman of good learning, and distinguished sense, who had once as strong prepossessions against this tenet, as can well be imagined; yet now he not only admits it as a truth, but embraces it as the joy of his heart, and cleaves to it as the rock of his hopes.

" A clear and cogent treatise, written by Mr BENJAMIN JENKS, entitled, *Submission to the Righteousness of God*, was the instrument of removing his prejudices, and reducing him to a better judgment." And the universal satisfaction given to experienced Christians of every denomination by the perusal of this book, leaves no room to doubt, but that this new edition will be acceptable to the public.



T O T H E
R E A D E R.

THIS little tract, which now for several years has passed in the world with some acceptance, and, for ought I know, without any public contradiction, adventures again abroad in another edition; the former impressions being a good while since gone off, I hope to the good satisfaction of all such as seek after that righteousness, the work of which is peace, and its effect quietness and assurance for ever.

And if there be not such an universal acquiescence among us, in this comfortable doctrine of our church, as there seems to be at this time, in the happy nursing-mother of our church, those prejudices and grudgings which may yet remain against it, do afford reason, more than I could wish, for the further insisting upon it: but no reason can I apprehend, why a minister of the gospel should fear to persist in asserting the faith of the gospel; and such a truth as is of the last importance, plainly taught by the church, as well as by the scripture, in terms so express, that a great man in the learned world, one of the eminent heads and reputed oracles of his university, (my worthy friend, lately gone to rest from his arduous labours,) could not forbear to

make the ingenuous acknowledgment, that I had the articles of our church clearly on my side. And when I minded him of a penetrating expositor presiding in this church, who (a little before) had endeavoured to give those articles a turn the remonstrant way, he replied with some heat, It will never do, and that it was a vain thing for any one to attempt it. Though, at the same time, himself thought fit to undertake the vindication of that very cause, which he confessed was opposite to the undoubted sense of his own church.

I am willing to think, that it was only (*disputandi gratia*) to tempt the country-parson. For when he first shewed me his celebrated book, (now published,) his expression was, That he had there stabbed the Socinian cause. But I am apt to think, that none who is in earnest on the part of Arminius, can ever give Socinus any thrust to reach the heart.

Though few Pelagians think fit to own the hateful name, even while they stickle for the pestilent doctrine; according to St Jerom's observation, That Pelagianism is the only heresy, which is ashamed to appear for the cause abroad, which its sutors suggest and propagate in corners; yet experience tells us, what credit a prevailing mode can give to things none of the best. Yea, let them be never so indefensible, yet, if smiling upon depraved nature, they will not want for champions and abettors to maintain the cause, even to death.

TO THE READER.

v

Full of rebellion, I would die,
Or fight, or travel, or deny
That thou hast ought to do with me. HERB.

So raves the man who is in (not his pure,
but) his corrupt naturals.

Naturam expellas furca licet——.

But whatever palliators of man's wicked apostasy may fly in my face, where I have begun to break up the fallow-ground, I shall not take my hand off from this plough.

And to see the faith of Christ assaulted and attacked, not only (as when it first set out) by open adversaries and professed infidels, but by such as lurk within the church, and pass under the Christian name, is enough to raise every believer's indignation, that would not be a traitor to his own professed religion.

Indeed the cause which I take upon me here to maintain, as it deserves, so it has, many much better champions. But yet, I hope, it may receive no detriment from my concern in it, when it shall appear, that one of such small accomplishments has yet so much to say for it. And truly that which is of God needs little of man, where holy scripture shall but be heard. But whoever they be that can make light of what is spoken by the Lord, are not like to regard what is said by the best Christian, or by the greatest scholar in the world. No; the lofty opinion which they have of their

own sufficiency, makes them so assuming, to dictate, as oracles infallible, to all the world; yea, and to model all the word of God, and teach men more by a few words, in seven minutes, than any one, that labours in the word and doctrine, shall do in seven years. Alas! we darken the matter; but they make it plain; plain indeed, that they would explain the faith of our Lord quite out of the church, and out of the world. Though they will not suffer us to recede a tittle from the express words of scripture, when it is their pleasure; yet let us but offer to hold them to it, and then, it is none of God's word, but only our sense; and what reason have they to be determined by that? Their own reason, (as the candle of the Lord,) they are ready to fall down and adore; not remembering, that still it is but a candle, and so diminished since the fall, as to dwindle in the socket. And all the candles upon earth must never offer to vie with the sun in the heavens: nor can they, with all their light united together, ever make such a day, as he alone does make. Yet will they not give the Father of lights leave to reveal any thing, but what their reason can fathom, and grasp, and easily deal with. And if they abide still peremptory by it, that what is above our reason to conceive, is above our faith to believe, (keeping strictly tenacious of that maxim,) they must turn such sceptics, as to disbelieve, not only the infinite, eternal being of God; but

the very frame and union of their own souls and bodies, and a hundred incomprehensibles, in common nature, just before them, which will so baffle them, that they shall never be able to resolve Nicodemus's question, 'How 'can these things be?'

Though it is true, men are not to pull out their own eyes, because these cannot see quite within the heavens, nor renounce their understanding, because it is not infinite, to parallel his that gave it. For reason, in its own sphere, is an excellent guide; and as far as it demonstrates, we may be certain. But then there are demonstrations of the Spirit, as well as of reason; and, I hope, those shall be allowed superior to these. For though the spirit of a man knows the things of a man; yet 'the 'things of God knows no man, but the Spirit 'of God,' 1 Cor. ii. 11. But even these things, some, notwithstanding, would be thought as able to master, as any thing else. And where they are above them, even for that reason they will take leave to reject them; nor think it enough to pass by them, but they must also cast their scoffs at them, and blunder on still, even as much as that ruler of the Jews did, John iii. concerning regeneration, and the other doctrines of faith thereon dependent.

But what Christians, indeed, can they be this while, that were never born of the Spirit of Christ, nor by that Spirit and faith conjoined to the glorious head of Christians? Yea,

what part are they like to have in regeneration, or in Christ himself, that seem neither to know nor to care, whether there be any holy Ghost, by whom alone they can be so renewed and united? and instead of seeking to partake of him, are readier to do despite to him? And how can we ever believe them to be led by that Spirit, which they have the foreheads to mock and blaspheme? Let them pretend to be never so good, I cannot admire the goodness of those men, that are for tearing up the very roots, upon which all true goodness should grow. Rather do I admire their confidence, to pretend either to goodness, or to the Christian name, who set so light by that blessed Spirit, which makes all the true Christians that are in the world.

How allowable soever it might be for heathens, who knew no better, to set up natural light above all; yet when such as have the blessed gospel, cannot forbear to burlesque and expound it even all away, they may look for the heavier sentence from him, with whom they make so bold. When one of his great indictments now against the world, is of 'sin, 'because they believe not on him,' John xvi. 19. Though this they may not think fit to reckon among their sins, yet is it, indeed, the great leading sin, that threatens them with a dreadful doom, if they do not mend their creed, as well as their morals, and make better friends with the Son of God, and acknowledge

his deity, and beg his mercy, and look to be pardoned and saved by his merits. But O how far are they from this, whose confidence of their own opinion rises so high, as even to give defiance to all that dare but make any question of it, whether they may not be deceived?

It is true they had a noble master here in England, for one of their founders, whose writings we know; and some of his dying words to his children, (I have heard,) were to the same tune, saying, "They talk of trusting in Christ for salvation; but I would have you to be virtuous, and trust to your virtue to make you happy." Yet after the little brokers and well-willers here to the cause, have been fetching from their factors beyond seas, and also drawing from the stock of this learned deist at home; notwithstanding all the helps they have, and all the pains they take, never are they like to find a quiet trade, and good success, as long as the gospel lies but open, and so clear against them; unless we should put such an unreasonable value on their reasonings, as to hearken to them, more than to our Lord himself, and all his own inspired messengers.

Such as set up their new fangles, instead of the faith once delivered to the saints; and not only vilify, but nullify the grace of faith, and while they make such a scorn of others systems, and pretend to give us a pandect of

the Christian doctrine; either quite leave out faith, as an ingredient of little or no use, or if they cannot, for shame, omit the mention of that, which the gospel all along so much inculcates, yet speak of it so sparingly or triflingly, as if it were needless to insist upon it; and we might even do as well without it; or call that the justifying faith, and a faith as much as is needful for any to make them Christians, which is indeed a believing no more than the devils do; no more than any hypocrites, unregenerate persons, and impenitent sinners may believe, viz. that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah: (A stingy, hide-bound faith, by which they shall not be obliged to believe either his incarnation or satisfaction; nor so to degrade themselves, as to put all their trust in him, and to look for their whole salvation from him.) And when they take upon them to enumerate all the benefits we have by our blessed Saviour, speak not a word of his merit, or redemption through his blood: no, but rather deny his death to be in the room and stead of sinners; and depend not on the blood of God, to make their peace, and reconcile all things to himself: and while they are such busy men, to ruin their own, and others comfort and salvation, would be thought yet the only Christians: our church (Hom. of Salv.) will not allow them to be so much as Christians at all, when it tells us, “that this
“faith, in the merits of Christ’s precious

“ blood, is the true cause of justification,
“ the holy scripture teacheth us: this is the
“ strong rock and foundation of the Chri-
“ stian religion. This doctrine advances and
“ sets forth the true glory of Christ, and beats
“ down the vain glory of man. And this
“ whoever denies it, is not to be account-
“ ed a Christian man.” Therefore what a late
writer would intimate, that the remonstrant
party is supposed to be the greatest part of the
church of England, and a Semi-pelagianism
now the common mode, I will suppose to be
a great slander; because I cannot think the
main body of our clergy to be guilty of such
prevarication and mere sham, to subscribe and
signify their consent to articles and homilies,
as sound and wholesome doctrine, which they
believe in their heart to be false and rotten.

Yet am I sensible, that some things which
I here plead for, against the common enemies,
offensive to our church, will also grind upon
other persons within it; whose learning and
worth in themselves, as well as their station
and the dignity of their places, I cannot but
honour. And this signification of my dissent
from them, is so far from gratifying any hu-
mour of contradiction in me, that I find it real-
ly pain and grief to me. But where we see so
darkly, and know but in part, mistakes are no
more than what may be expected on either side.
And whether they on the contrary part, or I
be in the right, all readers will take their li-

berty to judge, as shall appear best to themselves. However, I believe, and therefore have I spoken, the very sense of my soul; and not hastily, upon first thinking of the matter; but as the result of long search, and deep consideration, and much trouble and diligence, to compare and weigh what is said on both parts. And now I see my obligation in so good a cause, wherein I have had so near and great a concern, to testify the gospel of the grace of God, as the Apostle speaks, Acts xx. 24. and to break silence with the Psalmist, Psal. lxxi. 15, 16. ‘My mouth shall shew
‘ forth thy righteousness, and thy salvation all
‘ the day; for I know not the numbers there-
‘ of. I will go in the strength of the Lord
‘ God; I will make mention of thy righteous-
‘ ness, even of thine only.’

I must confess, that when first I set out for a preacher, I did appear (after the then mode of a prevailing party) a stickler for Pelagius: and what I wanted in skill, I made up in bitter zeal, against all that asserted and advanced the faith, which then I was for running down; and that not only as empty of truth, but full of absurdity. And though I saw scriptures, and articles, and homilies, all standing in my way; yet, being newly come from the fountain of learning, and observing which way the stream ran there, and under what extreme odium was every thing that appeared Calvinistical, (tho’ never so much the express doctrine of the

church of England;) and knowing what great names I had then to credit and strengthen my cause; and proud also of some arguments, wherewith I thought myself able to defend it: thus I drove on for a while, in my new province, till it pleased the gracious God, (who knew what need I had to be humbled,) in the midst of perfect health, and all the favour of men, and prosperity of the world, to throw me down under great and sore troubles of mind, and doubtings of my state, and dread of his wrath: where for a long while I lay, refusing to be comforted; yet all that time, not intermitting the work of my place, but was rather more concerned and sedulous in it, and (I thought) more assisted and fitted for it, than ever before. And in that school of sharp discipline, did I learn of my heavenly Teacher, the doctrine of faith, which ever since I have made conscience to maintain with all my strength. And as I dare not (upon any temptation whatsoever) offer to oppose it myself; so it touches me in the most sensible part, to hear any contempt signified against it by others: for there I take the old man to be up, *se defendenda*, and I cannot but look upon the Pelagian sentiment (in the point I oppose) as the very dictate of corrupt nature, and every unconverted man, more or less, to be leavened with it. So does it claw fallen man, with a good opinion of himself, to make him believe, either that he needs no conversion, or that he

is man sufficient to do all belonging to it, at his own pleasure. And though I dare not affirm every Arminian to be unconverted; (no, I am willing to hope better of many; yea, and where I see fruits of holiness in any, I will conclude, that there is the root of the matter, however his opinion and mine, in some things controverted, may differ;) yet must I needs declare my very great wonder, that any man in the world, who has ever known the grace of God in truth, should not be filled with the highest admiration of that grace; and instead of offering to dissemble and cloud it, should not rather be most free and forward to ascribe all to it; and see how little or indeed nothing it is, that a man contributes to turn the scale, and make himself to differ: when as the gracious God looks upon us in our blood, to bid us live, yea, quickens us, even when dead in trespasses and sins; and till he came with an over-ruling impetus upon me, I know too well, that all my own power was only to withstand the work: and it would never have been done, if it had not been the Lord's own doing. Herein then my own experience makes me heartily subscribe to the tenth Art. of free will: "That the condition of man after the
" fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn
" and prepare himself, by his own natural
" strength and good works, to faith, and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable

“to God, without the grace of God by Christ
“preventing us, that we may have a good will,
“and working with us, when we have that
“good will.”

Now, if in sticking so close to the articles and homilies of the church, (which I am sure I do, as I really believe I also do to the gospel of our Lord,) I must be fain to dissent from some fathers and sons of the church: yet is it no small relief to me, that I have with me, not only all the reformed churches abroad, but (as far as I can learn) all the best bishops, and the greatest worthies that ever presided over this church, for zealous defenders of this faith. So that if I labour under mistakes about the matter whereof I treat, (as I know who will think I do,) I have the good hap to be mistaken with the greatest and best company in the world. It is worthy to be observed, what the archbishop's chaplain, at the beginning of the century now revolved, says in his preface to the articles: “The church of
“England is not in religion changed, or variable like the moon, nor affects novelty or
“new lessons, but holds stedfastly and conscientiously that truth, which, by the martyrs
“and other ministers in this last age of the
“world, has been restored to this kingdom,
“and is grounded upon God's written word,
“the only foundation of our faith.” And indeed the opposite doctrine durst scarce peep out here since the reformation; till in the reign

of King Charles I. it began to shew its head with some assurance: and in the reign of King Charles II. it grew more rampant, as not only the court, but academic mode, and the almost only way then of preferment, for preachers and writers to inveigh against the doctrine of the articles, which they had solemnly acknowledged, and all, every one, agreeable to the word of God; and scarce endure so much as the title, to have them called articles of religion, as knowing the religion to be changed since the articles were made. And they might also know the sentence of excommunication to belong to them, according to the fifth canon, as impugnators of any of the thirty-nine articles, established in the church of England. But where I cannot hope to convince such as these, nor pretend to instruct any rabbies of the age; I intend this plain discourse for the sake of those unlearned, who need, as much as any else, to be established, yet may be rather shaken and disheartened, than edified or settled, by the contrary doctrine, vended under some big names, and backed with some plausible allegations. But of these teachers, I shall not make bold to speak the hard things which some others do, nor here offer them any reprimand, but only to mind them a little to consider, how the right reverend bishop Hall (whose name and memory leaves so sweet a favour to all good men) capitulates with Arminius, upon his upstart

doctrine, (7 Ep. 6 Decad.) "If it be truth
"thou affectest, what! alone? Could never
"any eyes, till thine, be blessed with this ob-
"ject? Where has that sacred verity hid her-
"self thus long, from all her careful inquisi-
"tors, that she now first shews her head to thee
"unsought? Has the gospel shined thus long
"and bright, and left some corners unseen?
"Away with all new truths; fair and plau-
"sible they may be, sound they cannot. Some
"may admire thee for them, none shall bless
"thee."

These [some] may agree with the church,
Art. 11. to think it a doctrine full of comfort,
indeed, that we are justified by faith only; but
to believe it also a most wholesome doctrine,
there they leave her; unless they can fetch
themselves off, with that new notion of faith,
(they seem so fond of and so hot upon,) which
helps to establish justification by works, even
at the same time as they profess the doctrine
of the church, that it is only by faith. And
how is this, but by the fine equivocation of
making faith and works to be all one, and tak-
ing faith only for faithfulness, or sincere obe-
dience? Nay, a certain clergyman (of strange
confidence, and seeming ignorance of his own
church's doctrine,) in a folio dedicated to his
metropolitan, in the late King Charles's reign,
defines the justifying faith which St Paul speaks
so much of, to be nothing but the Christian
religion; and justification by faith, nothing

but an adhering to, and practice of, Christian religion. And this he counts not enough yet; but soon after adds, that the law of faith demands much more than the law of works did, (bestowing a great deal of railing and scoffing upon all that are contrary minded.) And after him, a greater man, and much more wise and modest, yet calls this faith, our observation of the laws of Christ, and the entire condition of the new covenant, comprehending all the duty which it requires. And this seems to be the prevailing notion among all the writers of that new stamp.

Now do I bless God for the scriptures, and particularly St Paul's epistles, from which I can easily gather up a satisfying notion of justifying faith; when these men, methinks, lead us into a wood, as if they had a mind only to darken a plain matter, and amuse and lose the reader. And while they confound faith with works, and make no difference between believing and obeying, what do they but take away all distinction between the cause and the effect? and may as well tell us, that the sun in the firmament, and the fruits upon the ground, are one and the same; or that a man's natural life, and all the actions produced by that life, are the same: for faith works by love, and is shewed by good works; as the sun helps to produce fruits, and the life to perform actions. It does, indeed, virtually include obedience, and is the principle

of it; but yet I cannot call it the very obedience itself; for essence and properties still use to have a distinct consideration; though the truth of that may better be known, by the workings of these: yet still it is one thing, what the true justifying faith is; and another thing, what it does effect where it is. I grant, that it is ever productive of good works, but must deny that the works so produced do justify us in the sight of God.

Now some that take pains to prove that to be no true faith, which works not a holy life, do only tell you, what faith is not, to guard it from the abuses of rude pretenders; but they say nothing at all, what it is, to the establishment of any true believers; as long as they conceal or deny faith to be the soul's relying and trusting on the merits and satisfaction of Christ Jesus for pardon and salvation: nay, while they hold you in hand, (by the drift of all their discourses on faith,) that right believing is nothing else but holy living; and that no faith, but evangelical obedience, or a godly, righteous, and sober conversation, (which, we grant, is the necessary way of salvation, and a superstructure that must be built upon faith's foundation, that nothing else) will ever avail to justification, i. e. (directly opposite to the apostle,) that we are justified by works, and not by faith. And here their assurance and swaggering grows to such a height, that they seem to carry all before them. And had we

not better authority, and stronger conviction, wherewith to confront their words and reasonings, we must even give up the cause, and own our silly mistake. But when we come to consult scriptures, the unanimous confessions of the reformed, the positive determinations of our own church, the consciences of the best men, and the experiences of all true believers in the world; then we cannot but stand amazed at the audacity of some churchmen, and Protestant writers, that they should so coarsely use their own church, and so fiercely let fly at the Protestant religion. And from such I shall not be much startled to hear Antinomian, which I know they can throw, as a hard word, at the heads of some that least deserve it, when really the mad rage is at another thing, that sounds like it, Anti-Arminianism. This is meant, though less named, because the other sounds more invidious.

But, indeed, they that make believing insignificant, where there is but the probity of living, thus stand ready to surrender the great articles of our faith, to any Jews, Turks, and infidels, provided they lead but a good life, or what they are pleased to call so. And then Tully and Seneca may do even as well as St Peter and St Paul; and we must not regard our Lord Jesus, when he is so positive, John viii. 24. 'If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.' I will not say, they would bring us back from Christ to Moses a-

gain; for indeed it is from Christ and Moses both, to the old Pagans, that had but the light of nature, which these now so cry up, and magnify above the law and the gospel too, and affect to be such rational preachers, that they forget themselves to be gospel preachers.

Divinity's transcendent sky
With the edge of wit they cut and carve,
Reason triumphs, and faith lies by. HERB.

And at the same time, how do they run down the doctrine of our church? which teaches us, (Art. 18.) "they are to be had accursed, that presume to say, that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law, and the light of nature."

But though I grant, (and in the following discourse shall make appear, to all abusers of our doctrine,) that any pretences to good faith, without good life, are a dangerous cheat, and scandalous hypocrisy; yet we must not therefore jumble and confound the nature and distinction of things, to make *credenda* and *agenda* terms synonymous; nor dare to give God the lie, in refusing to believe the record which he has given of his Son, 1 John v. 10, 11. 'That he has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.' Though we might pretend to live as well without that belief; yet still must we abide by what is writ-

ten, and throw all our faith and religion upon the holy scripture revelation. And whoever deride such credulity, we shall at last find that to be the best grounded religion; when it is not, what this man says, or what the other magisterially lays down, but what the Lord says, and how he has determined, to which we must stand, and by which we must be doomed; and therefore should not suffer ourselves to be carried about with every wind of doctrine, as this or that proud wanton opinionist dogmatizes or dictates: nor let all the world ever unhinge or shake us out of that, which we find plainly fixed and settled in the gospel of truth. No; even he that was for becoming all things to all men, that he might gain some, yet would not heal and accommodate between Christ and Belial. And however, in lesser matters, (as to rites and ceremonies, and such things indifferent, as strike not at the faith of the gospel,) we must not be stiff and pugnacious, but bear one another's burdens, and forbear one another in love; yet, when the foundations are undermined, on which the church itself, and all our hopes and happiness are built, we cannot think fit then to be seeking the commendation of mild and gentle, for giving up to such supplanters of the gospel, that which should be dearer to us all than our lives: for easiness here will not become us, where faithfulness infinitely behoves us. No, we must not, for what they call good humour,

nor out of compliment to every pretender, renounce the faith of Christ, nor die in our sins: for if we lose the faith, it is doubt we shall lose somewhat else along with it, and good conscience will go after it. Nay, the apostle tells us, 1 Tim. i. 19. this is thrown overboard, before the other is shipwrecked.

And it were well, if they that exclaim so much of others loose tenets, had a little more humility and patience to examine their own; for they are not ever accounted most honest, that call by the hard name first. Nor are the violent pleaders for holiness always found the most holy persons. They do indeed but the more awaken suspicion, when their own mouths so much extol themselves. But for all their boasted ingenuity and probity, let them be never so righteous and good, (instead of envying, we wish they were still more so;) yet are we not to be awed by the learning of one, nor by the confidence of another; no, nor by the seeming honesty of a third; when, in the great matters of salvation, we see how learned men may be in the dark, and confident men shamefully out, yea, and good men under foul mistakes. But we are sure that God's word can never misguide us. And if we come there but honestly and humbly, to learn his will, and our duty, we may rest assured, that we shall not err in any needful point, to our undoing. And though we must not expect now to be above all ignorance

and misapprehensions; yet thus shall we be secure from all damning errors, and destroying delusions. And that is a satisfaction, as much as we can hope to attain in this life: wherein also we may acquiesce, as sufficient for our present state, and not covet to be wise above what is written, nor think to be righteous overmuch, or to be justified by a righteousness, beyond what the holy scripture declares necessary to our justification, i. e. the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, apprehended and applied by our faith, which, I think, I have reason to call a better righteousness than our own. And they that do not see any reason or need that they have to look after it, and rely upon it, I am sorry for them; and (in a way further than themselves seem to desire) I pray the Lord to have mercy upon them.

A
DISCOURSE

UPON

ROMANS x. 3.

*For they being ignorant of God's righteousness,
and going about to establish their own righteousness,
have not submitted themselves to
the righteousness of God.*

THE grand inquiry that most of all concerns every sinful man, is, how he shall come off, and obtain peace and acceptance with the holy offended God? Though secure sinners trouble not their heads about such matters, but seem to be in more care, how they shall keep conscience asleep, than what they shall answer, when brought into judgment; or they take up with some random hopes of the divine mercy, without consulting the divine revelation, to inform themselves upon what terms that mercy will be dispensed: yet whoever is not stupid and dead in sin, but awakened, and conscious of his guilt, must needs have a thoughtful heart, 'wherewithal to appear before the Lord;' what to plead, and how to bear up, at the righteous tribunal of the Judge eternal.

A

It is not to turn the head another way, or 'put the evil day far from us;' it is not to hide in the thickets of worldly concerns and frivolties; much less to go and indulge vain pleasure, and get into jolly company, and there think to eat and drink, and sport and rant it away. Ah Lord, what physick is this for the afflicted conscience of a sinner? The poor disquieted soul is not so to be stilled with rattles, or any vain diversions. But when the great trial is yet to come, the great care should be, what defence then to make, and how to escape?

That righteousness is needful for the purpose, I take all to be agreed. But what righteousness will serve the turn, and which sort we had best trust to, the several pretenders to righteousness cannot so easily hit it off. Now, one of the best teachers, from whom we may learn the certain truth, I think I have here fixed upon; St Paul, who so studiously discusses this point, and to the good satisfaction of all, but this natural man; with whom it sticks so hard, he cannot swallow that doctrine of faith, upon which the gospel of our Lord hangs so much, as even the whole of our title to the kingdom of heaven: nay, he applauds himself in it, that such camels will not down with him; as that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God; and that believing, we may have life through his name. The righteousness of works, that he understands well enough: but this right-

teousness of faith, he knows not what to make of; nor will he ever be persuaded to go out of himself, and depend upon another, which he counts so much below him, and such a stoop and condescension as he cannot away with. And of the very same temper and stiffness still, even to this day, are multitudes called Christians, as well as the Jews, whom the Apostle here censures; 'They being ignorant of God's 'righteousness,' &c.

He shewed the mighty concern that he had for this people, his countrymen, ver. 1. 'Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God 'for Israel is, that they might be saved.' Their salvation lay very near his heart; and he was afraid they should miss it, by taking the wrong way, and building all their happiness upon such a bottom, as would never bear the fabric, but utterly fail them. Nay, he seems to make the saddest imprecation upon himself for their sakes, chap. ix. 3. 'I could wish that 'myself were accursed from Christ for my 'brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.' Why, what was the matter with them? and where was the danger that so threatened them? Were they such wicked livers, as to be notoriously guilty of scandalous immorality? No, it should seem the quite contrary; that they were such as took care of their souls, and minded and followed the service of God. For (saith he, ver. next before) 'I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God.' They

are for his worship and glory; nay, they stickle for obedience to his law; and with good intention, and upright conscience, they defend probity and piety. And what then would you have more? Suppose, they labour under some mistakes, and those in fundamental points of faith, (as you account them;) yet why cannot you let them alone, when they are sober, honest, and religious men, that seek after God, and have a zeal for him? Yet this would not satisfy the Apostle: no, he could not think it yet enough, when he knew them so to err in the principle, as was enough to set them out all the way; and that they opposed the honour of God, to the Son of God; and opposed the observation of the law, to the faith of Christ.

Whence I shall take up this note, by the way, That we ought to be concerned for our friends and neighbours, who lye under damnable errors, tho' they may be men of good carriage, and commendable conversation. However our great care must be to convince and reclaim the vitious and ungodly, let them be never so orthodox and sound in their opinions; because right thinking will never bring a man to heaven, without holy living: but it is most evident, that presumptuous sinners, and workers of iniquity, are in the wide way to ruin, let them fancy or believe what they will. Yet if a man of virtuous manners go to set up pernicious errors, and plead for a Jewish or a Paganish doctrine, that reviles and

destroys the faith of Christ; here I am for reading that as an interrogative, 2 Cor. xi. 4. 'Could ye well bear with him?' Or an irony, It is bravely done, to bear with such a one! when we ought not to hear or suffer our holy faith and religion to be so flurred and undermined. For 'if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?' Psal. xi. 3. How shall we 'build ourselves in our most holy faith,' when the bottom, on which we should lay the superstructure, is taken away? Now God's vineyard is not only wasted by the boar out of the wood, and devoured by the wild beast of the field, Psal. lxxx. 13. but the 'foxes even the little foxes, spoil the vines,' Cant. ii. 15. The sly seducers, as well as the profligate livers, are mischievous to the church, and to the gospel and kingdom of our Lord Jesus. Yea the subtile foxes may do more hurt than the great ravaging brutes; because (for their pregnant parts, ready elocation, and plausible carriage) less suspected, and looking not only honest and well-meaning, but good and praise-worthy. And be it the most eminent man upon earth, nay, an angel from heaven, that preaches another gospel; our Apostle is so far from having him tolerated, that he pronounces him 'accursed,' Gal. i. 8. Why, what need such heat and vehemence, if a man think he can gain the same end another way, and obtain heaven by the practice of his virtue, as well as you by the exercise of your

faith? Yea he may count to do it more surely, because his virtue is a reality, and your faith may prove but a fancy. Yet this could not content the Apostle; but he is under a mighty concern to set men right as to the faith of Christ, though they had a zeal for God. And sure then he thought this would never serve the turn, without that. Nay, he knew, by experience in his own case, that it would not do. For, before his conversion, he could say, that he had 'lived in all good conscience 'before God,' Acts xxiii. 1. nay, that 'as 'touching the righteousness of the law, he 'was blameless,' Phil. iii. 6. Nobody could object any thing against him, for a wicked liver. Why, what then was lacking yet? and what need of his conversion? Indeed, according to the opinion of some, I see no need of it at all. For he being a moral upright man, of a virtuous and pious life, he had already all that was needful to salvation, in their apprehension. Nay, before his conversion, they may take him to be a wiser man, and in a better condition; as having then all the ingredients of their religion, whatever they reckon necessary to make one happy, good conscience, and probity, a sober life, all commendable behaviour towards men; yea, and a pious care for the service of God, according to his understanding. But afterwards, he is up in the boughs, and all for revelations and mysteries; and such spiritual notions, and unintelligible

conceits, as, in others, they call cant, and glibberish, and whimsies. When he talks so much of the 'wisdom of God in a mystery. The 'mystery of Christ. And this mystery, Christ 'in you, the hope of glory. His being the 'express image of his Father's person. The 'fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily. The great mystery of godliness, God 'manifested in the flesh. The things of God 'revealed by his Spirit. God shining in our 'hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of 'his glory, in the face of Jesus Christ. The 'holy scriptures being able to make one wise 'to salvation, through faith which is in Christ 'Jesus. The Father's chusing us in Christ 'before the foundations of the world, (not 'because we were, but) that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love. 'God's saving us, and calling us with a holy 'calling; not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, given 'us in Christ Jesus before the world began. 'The righteousness of God without the law, 'by the faith of Jesus Christ. Being delivered 'from the law, to serve in newness of spirit. Christ being made a curse for us, to 'redeem us from the curse of the law. God 'justifying the believers on Jesus. Counting 'faith for righteousness, to him that worketh 'not. Laying no foundation, but Jesus Christ. 'Rising from the dead, that Christ may give 'us light. Being in the Spirit; in Christ Je-

‘*fus.* And Christ being formed, and living
 ‘in us; and dwelling by faith in our hearts.
 ‘Having redemption, and being justified
 ‘through his blood. Accepted in the Beloved.
 ‘Having boldness, and access with confidence,
 ‘through the faith of him. Being saved by
 ‘grace, through faith; and not of ourselves,
 ‘but the gift of God: not of works, lest any
 ‘man should boast.’

When they see him so full of this (to them) wild enthusiasm, and running over with such sublime nonsense, do not our solid reasoners (as they would be counted) think the man is lost; his conversion has spoiled him, and turned the mighty scholar into an egregious babbler? Yea, are they not ready to say to him, as Festus, when he gave the account of his conversion, Acts xxvi. 24. ‘Paul, thou art beside thyself?’ Whatever may be their compliment to St Paul, if they do not (with the angry Jesuit) call him Lutheran and heretic, or charge him for talking like a fanatic; such, I am persuaded, would be their sense and treatment of another, and so bold would they make with any else that speaks in his language.

But this wonderful convert himself was very far from being of their mind. And how does he applaud his change? and how does he despise all his highest attainments before that? Phil. iii. 7, 8, 9. ‘What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for

‘ the excellency of the knowledge of Christ
‘ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered
‘ the loss of all things: and do count them but
‘ dung, that I may win Christ, and be found
‘ in him, not having mine own righteousness,
‘ which is of the law, but that which is through
‘ the faith of Christ, the righteousness which
‘ is of God by faith.’ And what his own eyes
were now opened to see, he labours so much
to make all men else understand, and believe,
and own. And such as are yet in the dark
about it, he expresses his sorrowful heart for
them, and uses his endeavours, and takes a great
deal of pains to undeceive them, particularly
in this place; ‘ They being ignorant of God’s
‘ righteousness,’ &c.

‘ God’s righteousness’ here, what is it? It
is not his own essential rectitude, by which
he is a righteous God, and by which, infused
into us, (according to Osiander’s wild senti-
ment,) he makes us also essentially righteous,
as himself. But it is either his vindictive jus-
tice, whereby he will take vengeance on all
sinners that fall under the curse of the law,
if they make not their use and benefit of the
help and remedy which he has provided for
them in the gospel. Or it is the righteous-
ness, which he requires of us, and works in
us; not only all outward regularity, but that
heart-purity which the superficial Pharisees
seemed not to understand, and therefore pla-
ced their righteousness so much (if not all) in

rites and forms. Or rather, God's righteousness here, is the righteousness which God bestows upon us, and which his Christ has wrought for us; and that justification of a sinner, which comes by the faith of Jesus, the faith in his blood. (Which is the notion by which I shall abide.) For so indeed the Apostle himself expounds it; That, Phil. iii. 9. 'the righteousness which is thro' the faith of Christ; 'the righteousness which is of God by faith.' And, Rom. iii. 21, 22, he calls it 'the righteousness of God without the law,'—and 'by faith of Jesus Christ,' i. e. a righteousness not obtained by our perfect fulfilling of the law in our own persons, but by our believing and relying on the Son of God, fulfilling all righteousness for us; which, through a merciful indulgence, now under the gospel-covenant, is imputed to us, as if it had been wrought by us.

Now, of this righteousness the Jews did not think. And such a righteousness how many learned knowing men even among Christians seem still at a loss to comprehend? 'And 'going about to establish their own righteousness,' they would set up in its stead, somewhat which they take to be, not only as good, but more real, and much better; somewhat which they work out of the strength of nature, by exercising themselves in virtuous ways; somewhat that is inherent in themselves, which they attain to by observing the

law; and therefore he calls it the 'righteousness of the law,' and their own, as not made over to them by imputation from Christ, in whom believers are said to be 'the righteousness of God,' 2 Cor. v. 21.

And let not any imagine, that by their own righteousness here, is meant only such a righteousness as consists in works of the ceremonial law, or hypocritical works, and such as are done before faith and grace. For it is the righteousness of such a law the Apostle speaks of, by which is 'the knowledge of sin;' and that says, 'Thou shalt not covet,' Rom. vii. 7. a law that 'justifies the doers of it, Rom. ii. 23. a law, 'which if a man do the things enjoined in it, he shall live by them,' Rom. x. 5. a law which is 'established by faith,' and not to be 'abolished,' Rom. iii. 31. And none of all this can be affirmed of the ceremonial law. Yea, it is a 'law of righteousness,' Rom. ix. 31. a law that is 'holy, just, and good,' chap. vii. 12. a law, that condemns all counterfeit performances, '(drawing nigh to God with the mouth, and honouring him with the lips, when the heart is removed far from him,' Is. xxix. 13.) a law that was the whole rule of obedience to the church of old, and that takes hold of the very heart, requiring to 'love the Lord our God with all the heart and soul, and mind and might; and one's neighbour as one's self.' And what can any believers under the gospel

do more? How then can I subscribe to the assertion of a modern writer, that "the law of Moses tended to make men no more than outwardly righteous;" and that "the obligation of it extended no further than to the outer man?" And who will think so basely of God's pure and righteous law, that a man might fulfil it, and yet be a hypocrite? when the very best works that ever we can do, are all required by this law. And yet they are excluded from the honour of effecting our justification before God, because still they are imperfect, and therefore short of what the law requires. And if all our own works are excluded, sure it must be understood of our good works. For what pretence can be for the bad? and who could expect to be justified for doing wickedly? Yea, where St Paul excludes works from justifying the sinner, how can we suppose him to mean works of the Mosaic law, as such, when the famous example, which he produces to strengthen his doctrine, Abraham, was dead above three hundred years before that law was given; and when the Gentiles, whose Apostle he was, and to whom he writes of this matter, were never under it, but without it? How much beside the purpose then had it been to dissuade them from a conceit of justification by that law, which they could never pretend to?

Nay, in the matter of justification, he disclaims his own works done after his conver-

sion, as well as those done before it, 1 Cor. iv. 4. Gal. ii. 16. and Phil. iii. 9. And the evangelical obedience, is it not still our righteousness, because we are bound to do it, and it is wrought in us, and by us? Though done in faith, and not without the influx of God's grace, yet it is our work, as far as any thing of the creatures can be called their own: for in God we 'live and move; and he works 'all our works in us,' even those of nature, as well as of grace. And upon the very same account, as some would make the works of believers meritorious, our Apostle shuts them all out, Eph. ii. 10. even because we are 'God's 'handy-work, created to them.' And even 'the just shall live,' not by their works, but 'by their faith,' Gal. iii. 11. not for any supposed worthiness that is in them, but by their believing in him, who indeed is worthy. Still he would have all that renounced, which suggests matter of boasting; as do the works of a believer; and that more than of another, because his works are better. And though they be done by God's gift and help; yet if we were justified by them, we might glory in them. So did the Pharisee, Luke xviii. 11. Though he magnified himself, and looked with a supercilious disdain upon others, and stands upon record for a proud boaster; yet he so far owned the Lord, and ascribed all to him, as to cry, 'God, I thank thee, that I am not' so and so.

And indeed such as plead for works done by the grace of God to justify them, may as well plead, that all manner of works, without distinction (counted good,) should justify them; because they use so to confound nature and grace, that, according to them, even a man's rational faculty, and his natural ability to work at all, is as much of grace, as any peculiar qualifications wrought by the holy Spirit. And so we must leave them (if they will) to quarrel with the Apostle, for making any difference at all between our own righteousness and the righteousness of God.

However, when it is the mercy of God, and the merit of Christ, that justifies the undeserving; methinks it is no fair thanking the Lord, for enabling them to do any good works, to go and set those works in the place of his grace, and give them the honour due to that. And I must confess, it would be as disingenuous and wicked to arrogate this glory of justification to our faith, which others confer upon their works. For though faith dignifies us, in receiving that righteousness of our Saviour, by which we are justified, and by which the imperfection of our works is covered, and our own righteousness made significant, to stand us in any stead; yet, all this while, it is not faith, as our work; no, but only as the vessel which God gives us to receive the treasure. And in itself, what is it, but like an earthen pot, filled with gold and jewels? And then

if faith itself, by which we are said to be justified, (as it apprehends the righteousness of Christ which does it,) yet has so poor a share in the matter, (though it be all that can be done on our parts;) O what part or honour will here be left for works, which the Apostle utterly excludes, as having nothing to do in the business of justification, but only come after, as the fruits and consequents of that faith which does the work!

All this I do here so much inculcate, because I know what pains the self-justiciaries are at still, to bring in somewhat of their own to do the business; and how much they are aggrieved to be stript of all their own plumes, that Christ may be all in all. If they cannot get it one way, they will have it another. If one sort of self-righteousness will not do for their justification, another shall. Thus they go about to set up some righteousness of their own; and they will not be put off it, but attempt it over and over. Like one that would (*σῆσαι*) set up a dead carcase to stand by itself; but that will not fadge, it cannot be accomplished. However, still they are trying at the unfeasible thing; and this they would fain have to do their business, without any righteousness of Christ imputed to them.

And so 'they have not submitted themselves 'to the righteousness of God.' That which is of his chusing and ordaining, they do not approve, and like well of it; they will not yield

and subscribe to it, as the best and only way of salvation. No; but they dispute and cavil, and are full of their exceptions against it. They find great fault with it; and they make but even a mere mock of it. It is foolishness to them, to look for life and salvation from another's death and passion. To be so beholden to the Son of God, and take all as a gratuity from him, this will not down the stout stomachs. So to receive the kingdom of God, as 'little children,' (which our Saviour says all must do, that will enter there,) they will not be such babies. No, they think themselves to be more men, and to know better things. They will not therefore vouchsafe to yield unto God's way of justifying and saving sinners, only through the merits and righteousness of his Son, apprehended and applied by their faith.

And thus it is expressed here, 'will not submit,' to shew with how much ado the natural man is brought to accept of mercy and happiness at God's hands, for Christ's sake. Such will stand it out as long as ever they are able. They will see what they can make of it in themselves, and will search all the world over for righteousness, before they will come to the Saviour of God's appointing; come to him, labouring and heavy laden.

And again, it is to shew, what meekness and lowliness is requisite to make one the true disciple of Jesus, to receive the saving be-

ness by him, and humbly to rely and depend upon him. Before it comes to this, there must be self-emptying, and self-denial; great abasement and humiliation. A man must be hard bestead, and fore put to it, and even thrown down to the ground, (as our Apostle was,) ere he will become so submissive and tractable, and ask, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' Before that, he lays down the law himself. Thus it must be; and so I will have it my own way; it can be no other way. No, he will hear of none else. All is nonsense that you talk to him of a righteousness transferred from one to another. Though it be the way of God's prescribing, no matter for that; he makes a scorn of it, and will 'not submit to the righteousness of God.'

Now from this place of scripture, I shall observe,

I. How dark-sighted even the wisest men are by nature, in God's way of justifying and saving sinners; 'ignorant of God's righteousness.'

II. How absurd is the attempt to set up our own righteousness; 'going about to establish their own righteousness.'

III. What a hinderance is pride to their happiness, who stand upon their terms with God, and will not submit to his righteousness. They will not have it his way, and they shall not have it their own.

I. Observe here,

How dark-sighted even the wisest men are by nature, in God's way of justifying and saving sinners; 'ignorant of God's righteousness.'

It was spoken of the Jews, that had the oracles of God, and their rabbies, and schools of the prophets, scribes and Pharisees, counted the most intelligent learned persons then in the world. Yet, in this most material point, they were at the foulest loss, and even in gross ignorance. What a bungler did Nicodemus (one of their leading men) shew himself in the business of regeneration? John iii. 9. To be born again? born of the Spirit? what stuff was this to him? he could not devise how any such thing could be. And so, the preaching of Christ crucified, what a stumbling-block was it to the Jews? 1 Cor. i. 23. They cannot get over that block to this day, nor ever bring themselves to believe, that salvation should come to them from one that was condemned and executed as a malefactor; and that any should be justified in the sight of God, through faith in his blood. Here still does it stick so hard with them, and with so many Judaizers among ourselves, who yet name the name of Christ. Nay, this the Gentiles rejected as a ridiculous story. It is to the 'Greeks foolishness.' The Athenian wits scorned St Paul as a babler, for preaching any such doctrine among them, Acts xvii. 18. 'Where is the wise? (says he,) where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world?

‘Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?’ 1 Cor. i. 20. and ver. 26. ‘Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh are called’ No, all their parts and abilities (though rising never so high) cannot reach up to this ‘hidden wisdom of God,’ 1 Cor. ii. 7. ‘which he hides from the wise and prudent, but reveals even unto babes,’ Matth. xi. 25. And this is the reason, that the most profound and sharpest men cannot be masters of it, with all their improvements and searches, and insight into natural things; because it is to be known only by divine revelation. The righteousness of God is ‘revealed from faith to faith,’ Rom. i. 17. We are to receive it as purely an object of faith, wherein we are gradually to grow and establish ourselves: and therefore it may be said to be ‘from faith to faith,’ i. e. from one degree of it to another. For it hangs all upon the revelation of God: both the righteousness itself, and the manner of imparting it, are taught us only in the holy scripture, and by the Spirit of God. And therefore the masters of reason are so averse to receive what all their reason could never discover. For though natural light, and our rational faculties, can teach us, that we should act righteously towards God and man; yet for the imputed righteousness of Christ, it is only the Spirit of God can convince the world of that: John xvi. 8. ‘He shall convince the world of

‘righteousness.’ Therefore our Apostle (as quick-sighted, and as great a scholar, as the highest pretender, yet he) knew nothing of it, till the ‘light from heaven’ came and shewed it to him; and ‘God revealed his Son in him,’ Gal. i. 16. For there is not only a revealing of Christ in the gospel, but a revealing of Christ also in the soul, as ‘the Lord our righteousness,’ which is needful to instruct us well in this point of justification by faith in him. And for all that is said in the gospel, of this righteousness of God, and being justified by the faith of Christ, men will snaggle and wrangle on still, to gainsay and evade it, till God reveals it in them, and the Spirit of God comes to convince them. Before such revelation and conviction, even the acutest men grope in the dark, as to these things of the Spirit, and reject and disdain them, yea, ridicule and blaspheme them; and are ignorant both of the law of God, and the righteousness of God.

I. They are ignorant of God’s law, the design and purity of it; and their evil case and misery under it.

1. They know not the design of this law, nor wherefore it was given; but mistake it to be, in order to their working a righteousness out of it, so as to be saved by it, and that through their own performance, without the interposition of a Mediator. Whereas the law was never delivered ‘to give life unto any;’

25 we may learn from Gal. iii. 21. 'For if
'there had been a law given, that could have
'given life, verily righteousness should have
'been by the law. But by the deeds of the
'law shall no flesh be justified in the sight of
'God: for by the law is the knowledge of
'sin,' Rom. iii. 20. It is the glass to shew a
man his defects and deformities, how far he
comes short of observing it, and how much
he is obnoxious in transgressing it; and that
here he is gone and lost, if he have not a fur-
ther help. Therefore it was only according
to the youngster's own principle, that our Lord
answered him, Matth. xix. 17. 'If thou wilt
'enter into life, keep the commands.' True,
he should, upon performance of that condi-
tion. But it is as true, that this condition is
now impossible to any child of Adam. The
man asked, 'what he should do?' shewing that
he sought life in works; and then if he did so,
our Saviour let him know, that it must be by
observing the law of God, because that is the
perfect rule of obedience. And no other works
could serve the turn; and even those alone, he
should find such a task, as would give him e-
nough of it, and (if ever he came to under-
stand himself) make him fain to seek out fur-
ther.

Such another commonly mistaken text,
seems to be that, Rom. ii. 13. 'Not the hear-
'ers of the law are just before God, but the
'doers of the law shall be justified;' i. e. they

shall be so, if they do it, as it ought to be done. But what then? is the doctrine to be raised from hence, that justification cannot be had without our own fulfilling the law of God? and that no man can be justified but by the deeds of the law? So the sound may seem to carry it. But it is plain, that the Apostle's design there is quite another thing; even to humble the Jews hearts, and to stop their mouths; in shewing, that as none of them did, so none of them could, keep the law, to their justification. And then he infers from the premises, chap. ii. 20. 'Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God.' No, you must be glad to take another course; for this will never do; how often, and how far soever it has been attempted, it is not to be performed. And though many are still hammering at it, they can make nothing of it; nor shall the exactest liver ever be able to work out his salvation only by this means.

Indeed the God of all grace did not intend the delivery of his law, to evacuate and thrust out the covenant of his grace, which he was pleased to make so long before it. As the Apostle assures us, Gal. iii. 17, 18. 'This I say, that the covenant which was before confirmed of God in Christ, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of

‘the law, it is no more of promise: but God
‘gave it to Abraham by promise. Where-
‘fore then serveth the law?’ The Apostle
there puts the question, ver. 19. and he an-
swers it himself: ‘It was added, says he, be-
‘cause of transgressions, till the seed should
‘come, to whom the promise was made.’ It
was not given, as such a covenant of works,
by coming up to which, men should make their
own passage into heaven, so to gain righteous-
ness and life eternal. No, but it was given
as a perfect rule of life, to instruct sinners in
their duty, and oblige them to do it; and then,
by shewing them their insufficiency, and con-
vincing them, that all their own obedience
could never do, to direct them into better
hands; as Hagar, the handmaid, to lead them
unto Sarah, the rightful mother; or, (as the A-
postle expresses it, Gal. iii. 24.) ‘as our school-
‘master to bring us unto Christ;’ that we
might be justified by faith in him, where we
could never be justified by any works of our
own. ‘For Christ is the end of the law for
‘righteousness to every one that believeth,’
Rom. x. 4. He effects that for them which
the law could not; for it only shewed them
what was to be done, and gave them no power
to do it; but he fulfils it for them, and in
them; and so provides, that all the utmost de-
mands of it shall be satisfied to the full. Such
therefore as do not take the law for their tu-
tor and monitor, to send them unto Christ

Jesus, do mistake it; and are yet to learn the meaning of it.

O sinner! the law of God is as the avenger of blood at thy heels, to drive thee away unto the city of refuge, and even to constrain thee to fly, for the life of thy soul, into the arms of thy Saviour. Take the warning then, and let the necessity of thy case cast thee upon him; and do not neglect the only remedy. If thou wilt not be allured, yet at least be terrified into it: and let the rigour of the law do thee this kindness, to throw thee into the bosom of that blessed Surety, who, where thou art insolvent, and unable to discharge what thou owest to the law, has undertaken for thee, and paid all, even to the utmost farthing.

2. They that stick in the law, and make account to be justified by its righteousness, are ignorant of its latitude and purity; and do not know how broad and spiritual, how holy and heart-searching it is. They think it enough to be honest and sober, to hear and pray, and do some external acts; as if then they had performed obedience to the law sufficient, and so brisk up, and conclude, all is well. As St Paul says of himself, Rom. vii. 9. 'I was alive without the law once.' *Without* it! when was he so, who all along had been bred up under it? Indeed he was not at all without it in the letter. But it did not before come home in its spirit and power, to ransack his conscience, and to search all the privy corners of

his heart. And then he was alive, and thought himself in good case enough. But when it came, and pierced into his soul, with its purifying energy, to catch hold of all his secretest motions, desires, purposes, inclinations, and thoughts, then he saw he was a lost man, by the sentence of the law, if he were not found in Christ, and helped by his merit and grace, to answer for all that he had misdona, and to do all for the future in an acceptable manner.

Never be so vain, then, bankrupt sinner! as to think, that thou (out of thy poor stock and strength) canst satisfy all the precepts of such a righteous, exact, and perfect law. For when thou hast done thy very utmost, thou wilt be still exceedingly short, and hast extreme need to look out further, to shelter thy unrighteousness under that righteousness of thy Redeemer, which alone is complete, and without any manner of blemish. O wo to the most laudable liver, should he be tried and doomed by this law, naked, without the covert of a Mediator!

3. They that are for working themselves a righteousness of their own, out of legal observances, to serve the turn, without the righteousness of Christ Jesus, are ignorant of their evil case and misery under the law; where again they put themselves under the old covenant of works, which brings them into the saddest bondage, 'to do the whole law,' Gal. v. 3. which, because they can never do; so

they fall under the sentence of such guilty malefactors, as are out of the compass of the promise, and will be cast out of doors, as slaves, and none of the children. For 'we are
' the children of God, only by faith in Christ
' Jesus,' Gal. iii. 26. 'But as many as are of
' the works of the law, are under the curse: for
' it is written, Cursed is every one that conti-
' nueth not in all things which are written in
' the book of the law to do them,' ver. 10. And (as it follows there) 'that no man is jus-
' tified by the law in the sight of God, it is e-
' vident: for, the just shall live by faith. And
' the law is not of faith: but, the man that
' doth them shall live in them.' He shall live
in them, if he do them. True; but that no
man ever did, or can do. And there men
stand in their own names, and must bear their
own sins, and abide by their own righteous-
ness: which if it be not perfect, the law that
requires perfection condemns them; and they
have no Mediator to relieve them. For their
covenant which they are under, admits of no
such reserve; and so they lye open to all the
burning wrath due to sinners; from which
they have nothing to screen them, no defence
to stand between them. And so wretched a
case as this, is it not wonder that any men in
their wits should ever chuse to be found in?
Yet such a blindness and insatuation is upon
all men naturally, that they do not (will not)
see the misery; but there lye short of Christ

Jesus, and instead of taking care to come out of that state, take pains rather to defend themselves in it.

O that you would open your eyes, sinners, and see the wrath of God hanging over you, and abiding upon you, till you get from under the law, and the covenant of works, to come under grace, and the covenant of promise! For 'the law worketh wrath,' Rom. iv. 15. It gives no hope to any, but such as come quite up to its demands in every particular. You know not then what you do, when you are out of Christ; and there think to come off well enough, by some works of honesty, sobriety, church-going, and praying; which, alas! have no sufficiency to absolve the guilty, and to give you a title to the heavenly glory. If you be not endued with that righteousness which is by the faith of Christ, you are still children of wrath, and under the curse. And if ever you will be wise for your souls, and secure the effects of your eternal salvation, you must renounce all confidence in the flesh, and in any the best things that you can do for yourselves; and resolve to trust all that ever you have, in this only bottom of Christ's righteousness; and desire no such recommendation in the world, as to be found in him, and to have his righteousness imputed unto you. For 'blessed is the man to whom God *'imputeth righteousness without works,'* Rom. iv. 6. The inheritance being not by the law,

but by promise; and therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, and 'the promise 'be sure to all the seed,' ver. 16. For, alas! what assurance could there be, if it depended upon such an uncertain thing as their obedience? But when 'God declares his righteousness in justifying the believers on Jesus,' Rom. iii. 26. then it depends upon his own promise and faithfulness, which is sure and never-failing.

Again, they are ignorant of this righteousness, who offer to set up any other to build their justification upon. They do not know its necessity, nor its excellency.

1. Not the necessity; but think they can appear well enough before the tribunal of heaven in their own names, because they are so and so qualified; and thank God, they are not like such and such; no swearers, nor drunkards, nor adulterers, nor sabbath-breakers, nor thieves, nor murderers, nor any notorious sinners; but lead sober and honest, yea, good and religious lives. And upon this foundation they lay all their hopes of salvation, when, alas! such righteous ones Christ did not come to call. So he says, Matth. ix. 12. They shall see more need of him, and be more sick for him, before ever they shall have him. As good as ever the boasted virtues are, they will not be at all for their good, whom they keep from the only Saviour. When they think they want even nothing, alas! they want the main

of all. They want a Mediator, to interceed for their offending persons; they want the holy One of God, to purge their defiled natures; they want an infinite propitiation, to atone for all their sins; nay, they want a most powerful Advocate, to recommend their poor imperfect services; and an almighty Saviour, to bear the iniquities of all their holy things: and they want the sense of all these wants, to see the extreme need they have of the Lord Jesus to be their righteousness and their Redeemer.

O sinners! there is no other righteousness that will ever justify you; there is 'no other name given under heaven to save you.' But if you fail of this, you lose all; and being 'without Christ, you have no hope,' Eph. ii. 12. Look about you, then, in time, and seek to the all-sufficient Helper, which God in mercy has provided to help you. O let all go to make sure of this one needful good, which is more than the all of this world. Like the merchant seeking goodly pearls, Matth. xiii. 46. who, 'when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it;' O be contented to let go, not only dearest relations and fruitions in the world, but even all wisdom and goodness in yourselves. I mean not, to let them go as to the possession and practice of them, but as to any trust in them, or dependence on them, (exclusive of Christ's righteousness:) rather beg

pardon, than hope to be saved, for them. And rest all your faith and expectation upon him that died for your sins, and rose again for your justification, and who alone is able to effect that eternal redemption for you, which could never else be wrought by any other person or merit in all the world.

2. They are ignorant of the incomparable excellence of this righteousness, that think of setting up their own; when it is a righteousness which exceeds not only that of innocent Adam, but that of all the glorious angels; because it is the righteousness of God, and not only the righteousness which God has appointed, but the righteousness which he who is God has fulfilled. 'The ministration of which 'righteousness exceeds in glory,' 2 Cor. iii. 9. O where then is their sense that can admire the righteousness of a creature, and not regard his righteousness, who is 'God blessed 'for ever?' Sure, 'to them that believe he 'is more precious,' 1 Pet. ii. 7. for faith has an eye to see that glory which proud reason sets at nought. And though the contempt shall once come to be their own, who now cast their contempt on the 'Lamb of God, that 'takes away the sins of the world,' and set up somewhat else above him, and think to come off as well or better without him; yet 'he that 'believeth on him shall not be confounded,' 1 Pet. ii. 6. No; for confusion arises from disappointment; and it will be their portion,

who trust to that, which in the needful time will utterly fail them: *Is. l. 11.* ‘Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks which ye have kindled. This shall ye have of my hand, ye shall lye down in sorrow.’ All other righteousness, what is it, but like a little blaze in a wisp of straw, compared with this glorious holding light of the Sun of Righteousness, which is most bright and indefeafible? And therefore our Apostle counted all things (not excepting his own blameless righteousness of the law,) not only no better than filthy rags, but even loss and dung, if set in competition with the righteousness of his Saviour; and for justification, he would ‘make mention of this, and of this only.’ But he did not think at this rate before his eyes were opened, and he was enlightened with the revelation from above. No; before that, he had as contemptible an opinion of Christ, and faith in Christ, as any of his virulent blasphemers among us now can have. And so it was spoken as a wonderful effect of his happy conversion, *Gal. i. 23.* ‘He who persecuted us in times past, now preaches the faith which once he destroyed.’

And O that the like may once be said of all that yet stand out from the faith of Christ, and oppose their own peace with God, which is built only upon their justification by this faith! For ‘being justified by faith, we have peace

‘with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ,’ Rom. v. 1. O that they would come better to bethink themselves, and consult their own blessed interest, as ever they hope for any saving benefit by the Redeemer of the world, and learn to treat him more honourably; and at last bring themselves to ‘submit to the righteousness of God!’

And O that all you who read these lines, may be so kind to your own souls as to provide yourselves of a righteousness, wherein you may appear, and stand before God in your last trial, with boldness and comfort! And one would think there should not need much ado to persuade any to take the course of the gracious God’s own prescribing, that is so visibly advantageous to themselves; when ‘all the world is become guilty before him,’ Rom. iii. 19. and there is no pleading, Not guilty; nor any escape to be made by the plea of legal righteousness, ver. 20. But ‘the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, is to all, and upon all them that believe:’ yea, we are ‘justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ,’ ver. 22. & 24. O how worthy of all acceptation is such rich grace and mercy! And instead of shewing any backwardness to submit to it, O with what gladness and thankfulness should every one receive it, and bless the God of all grace for it! that when you are conscious of your sin and wretched-

ness, and know how ill you have done, and that with all the best you can do anew, there is no making amends for what is past, nor getting in again with the offended Majesty of heaven; yet that to him who 'worketh not, but believeth on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith should be counted for righteousness;' (as it is expressly said, Rom. iv. 5.) This is a favour to the poor sinner, such as might be thought indeed too great to be believed; but whenever offered, one would think, it should with both hands most readily be received; and that there should little oratory be wanting, to 'pray sinners in Christ's stead' (upon such sweet and happy terms) 'to be reconciled unto God.' You are wiser than to refuse any advantages of the world, when so easily you may have them; O do not then imitate the perverseness of those who reject the tenders of pardon and life eternal, and will not accept all the most blessed benefits to be enjoyed for ever in the world to come, when the Father of mercies offers them freely, but upon 'believing in the name of his Son;' and has assured you, that your faith shall be imputed to you for righteousness; as 'Abraham believed God, and that was counted to him for righteousness,' Rom. iv. 3, 24. O leave not the Saviour any cause then to complain of you, as of those, John v. 40. 'Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.' But seeing all your interest and feli-

city treasured up in him, devolve and cast yourselves upon him. And let the Lord Jesus be your only hope; and look for all your remission, and all your salvation at his hands; not for any thing that you have done yourselves, but for the sake of what he has done on your account. And thus will you do the best thing that ever you can do for your own dear souls, and shew your good understanding in the way of salvation; that you are not ignorant of God's righteousness; but have been 'taught, and heard, and learned of the Father,' to come unto his Christ, John vi. 29. and are better instructed, than to set up a righteousness of your own, wherein to place your confidence.

And so I pass to the second observation,

How absurd is the attempt to engage in such a design? 'going about to establish their own 'righteousness.'

And what is that? Is it walking uprightly, and working righteousness? is it hungering and thirsting after an inherent, as well as an imputed righteousness? No; for this is an eternal indispensable duty, incumbent still upon all; and no believers are exempted from it, but rather more than any else obliged to it; even to 'live soberly, righteously, and godly.' And (to allude to that of the Apostle, 2 Cor. v. 3.) being clothed with Christ's righteousness, they must not be found naked of their own; but resolve, with Job, chap. xxvii. 6.

‘My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live:’ but I will render to all their dues, and be punctual in my dealings with every one; for all piety without honesty is but hypocrisy. Yea, I will render to God, as well as to man, the things that are his; and, as far as I am able, seek and keep that comprehensive righteousness, which is the constellation of all virtues and graces; the universal conformity to the rule of God’s holy word; the whole of my duty; such a habit and course of well-doing, as shall denominate me an Israelite indeed, without any allowed guile or iniquity regarded in my heart. This I will ever take care of, and with all my might endeavour to make good.

However contemptuously some can talk of moral accomplishments, they that would have a religion without morality, are further from the kingdom of God, than their despised moral man. And whom the world finds unrighteous, they will (and may) be bold to conclude them ungodly; because God commands all men ‘to do justly, and love mercy,’ as well as to ‘walk humbly with him.’ And a religion confined to the first table, is quite contrary to that of the Apostle, James i. 27. ‘Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.’

‘Do we then make void the law through faith?’ Rom. iii. 31. No such matter: ‘we establish it;’ and provide better for the fulfilling of it, by this doctrine of faith, than ever else it could be fulfilled. The doctrine has no tendency at all to Antinomianism, and carnal liberty; or to throw out repentance, good works, and holiness of life. However it may be aspersed, and corrupt men do often abuse this, and indeed all the grace of God, turning it to licentiousness; and though such as are themselves destitute of the spiritual life, do not know how righteousness imputed does work obedience to God, and all holy living; and so they traduce what themselves never understood: yet in all true believers, this righteousness imputed does, and ever will, produce the fruits of righteousness inherent. And notwithstanding faith is alone as to justification, yet it is never alone as to the individual consequence of a godly conversation.

Indeed St Paul, when he seems to be charged for evacuating the law by faith, does not vindicate himself, by making works and personal holiness the main things needful to our justification in the sight of God; (as is the way of some teachers since, who think they have learned to be more wary than he was;) no, but he urges such gospel-motives to holiness, as are the most powerful with all believers, who, after faith received, will not be less holy, but more; because then they have in them the

forcible spring of holy works, which before they had not. Therefore the Apostle tells them, Rom. vi. 14. 'Sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law, but under grace.' A sort of reasoning, which some of our masters of reason would count very unreasonable, if they heard any of us use it. What, say they, do you teach that believers are not under the law? and is not that as much as to say, they are lawless, and they may even live as they list? for what should hinder them? where there is no law, there is no transgression. And however they fly out, still all is well; and who shall find fault with them? And this is fine comfortable doctrine to such as love their sins better than they do their Saviour.

Thus the unexperienced may think they have covered our doctrine with confusion, and struck it quite dead. But he that was better acquainted with the workings of God's grace, knew the contrary to what they would infer; that the law was never so deadly to kill sin, and so fruitful to produce holiness, as the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. For 'by the law is the knowledge of sin;' not the cure. No; it does but discover sin, and irritate and provoke it; as a dam cast across the stream, makes it swell, and rage, and rise the higher, till at last it gets up to burst through, or break over the bounds. It gives no power at all to beat down the sin and wickedness of which it con-

vinces. Whereas the grace of our Lord is a vital principle of holiness in the heart; the seed of God, that there ferments and works, to throw off sin; and will never suffer it to reign, however it still dwells in the mortal body. Therefore they that are under grace, shall not be under the power of sin. And they are indeed strangers to the nature of faith, and to the genius of the new creature, and to the constraining efficacy of the grace of God, and the love of Christ, who can take these for the encouragements of wickedness; than which there are not, in the world, more prevailing restraints from it. And however (the υἱοὶ τῆς ἀπειθείας,) the sons of unbelief can make nothing of these inducements, yet no such ingenuous and mighty arguments to gain upon the children of promise, to make them holy, as he that has called and obliged them is holy.

The establishing of our own righteousness, then, here under censure, must never give any check to our endeavours for the ‘perfecting holiness in the fear of God. No; every one that names the name of Christ, must depart from iniquity,’ and strive still more and more to conform, as a purified member, to the holy Head of that body to which he belongs.

And therefore some might spare the talk which they give themselves, to prove, with much solemnity, what I know no one who denies, that we are still obliged by the moral law, as our rule of life. Though sure they

do not mean, that we are 'debtors to keep the 'whole law,' Gal. v. 3. so as to work our justification out of it. For then, to what end serves the faith of Christ, if still we be under the lash, as slaves, to obey perfectly, or perish everlastingly? Why, Bellarmine will tell us, that "the gospel is the grace of the Spirit, "given in the New Testament, making us "able to fulfil the law." And so far he says true, that all grace is thus given us; but yet not given us to this end, that we should fulfil the law, so as to be thereby justified. For we have the grace, only to fulfil it in sincerity, but not to perfection. And yet if it be not to perfection, it cannot be to justification.

And should any question, how it can be to salvation, if not to justification? because we cannot be glorified till we are justified; and that which will serve the turn to save us, why should it not be thought available to justify us? I answer, the way of justification and of salvation is not the very same in every particular: but the gospel shews us a diverse method to effect the one and the other, and more to be done for this than for that. For God is said to justify the ungodly; but it is denied that he will save any, till they are made holy. Obedience is the condition of the new covenant, needful to salvation; to make those who are already heirs meet for their heavenly inheritance, i. e. not to give them a right to it, but fitting dispositions for it. But then justi-

fication cannot alike depend upon any works or obedience, because it is before them. And till a man is justified, he can do nothing that is of faith, nor good, and pleasing to God. So that the 'obedience to righteousness,' mentioned, Rom. vi. 16. I think cannot be meant of a righteousness to justification, but only of that righteousness which makes us holy in our conversation. Unless we take it for the 'obedience of faith,' Rom. xvi. 26. which will indeed avail to 'justification of life.' For it is to him who 'worketh not, that his faith is 'counted for righteousness,' Rom. iv. 5. And if he 'worketh not,' i. e. no works to justify him, but all his good works are purely the effects of God's grace and justification; how vain is it then to plead for any righteousness of works? Indeed we can never be justified 'by 'them,' though we must never look to be saved 'without them.'

Therefore (in the positive part now) to 'establish our own righteousness,' is to build and depend upon it, for our justification in the sight of God, and our acquittance and absolution from the law's charge and accusation; to abide by it, as our plea, wherewithal to answer for ourselves in judgment; to stand to it in our last trial, at the tribunal of heaven: and the defence that we think then to make, why sentence of condemnation should not be pronounced upon us, because we have carried so fair, and done all things so well; therefore

we not only hope to escape the punishment, but we lay claim to the reward; not for Christ's sake, but for our works sake; not because he has satisfied and merited for us, but because we are so fit and worthy ourselves.

This I take to be the 'establishing of our own righteousness.' But are there any so extravagant and senseless, as thus to erect all the fabric of their salvation upon such a rotten foundation? Yes, this was the way that the Jews took; St Paul here tells us. And do not we find that we have many brethren still, though going under the Christian name, that keep up the very same humour, and plead their own goodness, as all in all to bring them off, when God shall enter into judgment with them? They seem to think themselves ready for him, let him come when he will, and that they are able to stand upon their own legs. And a justification by the satisfaction and merits of Christ Jesus, that is least in their thoughts, and seldom in their mouths, unless it be to shew the spleen and scorn with which they treat all such pretensions.

They plead all for justification only by works; though the Apostle tells us, Gal. ii. 16. 'That a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ.' Yea, he excludes all manner of works done by us, Tit. iii. 5. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done.' And therefore what St James affirms of justification by

any works, must not be understood of the same sort of justification as St Paul pleads for. For as the former deals with vain men, puffed up with the conceit of their faith, and making slight account of works, when all their faith was nothing but the knowledge and profession of the gospel, or a notional assent to its truth, and verbal boasting of their believing; with which they took up, as sufficient. Such a bare speculation and acknowledgment of Christ, without any care to live to him, or to make the right use and benefit of him, he calls dead; and reckons it for none, as to the justifying and saving of the soul: for how could such a faith, fruitless, and no more than the faith of devils, justify or save? So (I say) he treats of a different kind of justification from that which St Paul establishes: not of the justification of our persons in the sight of God, and before his judgment-seat; but of the justification of our faith in the sight of the world, and at the bar of our own consciences; where (it is true) works must come in, to make good our pretensions to the holy Saviour of the world. For though faith justifies us, yet works declare us to have that faith; and though faith is the seal of our justification, yet works are the seal of our faith; and faith does the business, but works prove it to be done.

And I cannot agree with those, who, to invalidate the credit of St Paul, bring him in

speaking more darkly, and not so well advised; and would have St James to come after, as his interpreter, to help him out, who (no doubt) was very well able to explain himself, and rightly to manage and apply his own doctrine, which he insists upon so statedly and largely; when St James does but touch it collaterally and sparingly. And if we must question the authority of either, it should be rather of the last named; because his epistle has been sometimes called in doubt, and the other's never was. But I would not offer to question either, as not authentic; nor have we any need to go that way to work, when they are so easily reconciled, and all the clashing is only in appearance. For that St James does not mean the justification of our persons before the Lord, is to me evident; because he makes faith to have little or no concern in it; which yet all that hear the scripture, must own to be a concause, at least, if not the only cause. Yea, because the allegation which he brings in, chap. ii. 23. would overthrow all his cause, if he intended the justification in God's sight. For 'the scripture (says he) was fulfilled, which 'faith, Abraham believed, and it was imputed to him for righteousness;' i. e. Abraham obeying God, in that difficult service, of offering up his only son, did make appear what was spoken of him in that scripture, and gave the evidence and verification of it, that his faith was imputed to him for justification;

though that justification was indeed many years before he made this attempt to sacrifice Isaac, and long before Isaac was born. And if Abraham was justified before he wrought the works, then he could not be justified by the works, unless it be in some other sense of justification. Whence it appears, that St James speaks of the declarative justification. And so it is observable, how he makes his demand, (*δειξὲν μοι*) 'Make appear, demonstrate, and shew me thy faith,' ver. 18. let me see such signs of it, that in the judgment of charity (though not of infallibility) I may conclude upon it, and so pronounce, as the Lord did in the case of Abraham, Gen. xxii. 12. 'Now I know that thou fearest God:' though before the thing was not latent to me, yet now thou hast given a proof and manifestation of it, that thou hast not only a form of godliness, but the power. And thus thy faith is made perfect, i. e. shewed to be so; as good fruits do not make, but they manifest, the tree to be good. And thus is the word used, 2 Cōr. xii. 9. 'My strength is made perfect in weakness.' For how can our weakness add to God's almightiness, but only illustrate and glorify it the more?

I do insist the longer here upon this, because many seem so averse to take any notice of it; but still run on to disprove the word of God, in proving, that we are justified before him by our works. For to set them up as the great plea, on which we mean to hang

all, when called to our last accounts, is not only to confute both these apostles, but to confront the whole doctrine of the gospel; and very abhorrent from the sense of all true believers in the world; even the very best of them; such as Job, who, though he maintained his integrity against those that calumniated and abused him, yet before the Lord he cried, 'How should man be just with God? If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand,' chap. ix. 2, 3. And, verses 30, 31, 32. 'If I wash myself with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and my own clothes shall abhor me. For he is not a man as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment,' chap. xl. 4, 5. 'Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer: yea, twice, but I will proceed no further.' And, chap. xlii. 5, 6. 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' So David, Psal. cxliii. 2. 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.' And, Psal. cxxx. 3. 'If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?' And Daniel, ch. ix. 7, 18. 'O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto

‘thee, but unto us confusion of faces. We
‘do not present our supplications before thee
‘for our righteousnesses, but for thy great
‘mercies.’ And our Apostle, (if some do not
think he lost his good sense, with his good
conscience, upon his conversion,) 1 Cor. iv. 4.
‘I know nothing by myself; yet am I not here-
‘by justified.’ And, Phil. iii. 9. ‘I would
‘be found in Christ, not having mine own
‘righteousness.’ And even where he seems
to be in a boasting humour, 1 Cor. xv. 10. ‘I
‘laboured more abundantly than they all:’
he presently corrects himself; ‘yet not I, but
‘the grace of God which was with me.’ And
his ‘fighting a good fight, finishing his course,
‘and keeping the faith,’ 2 Tim. iv. 7. what
is it, but still a magnifying of the same grace
discovered upon him, and working such sweet
and happy effects in him, to prepare him, as
an heir, for the heavenly inheritance? And
so, indeed, as good works, and holy qualifica-
tions, are some rays of the divine countenance
shining on our souls; yea, as they are some of
the features of God’s own holiness, rendering
us amiable to him, we may take pleasure and
encouragement in them. And though here-
upon the Apostle was confident of the ‘crown
‘of righteousness laid up for him;’ yet he ex-
pected not that crown to be paid, but given
to him, from God, indeed, as a righteous
judge; not laying him down wages deserved for
his services, but discharging a due to his own

gracious promises, and dispensing out the largesse flowing from his infinite bounty; yea, crowning his own work, and his own righteousness. And so that 'right to the tree of life,' Rev. xxii. 14. is not of debt, but of promise, and the effect of Christ's merit; with whom we are co-heirs, only as we are the 'children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.'

And when any holy men in scripture plead their righteousness with God, as Psal. vii. 7. 'Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness;' and Is. xxxviii. 3. 'Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight;' we are not to understand it of the justification of their persons in general, but of some cause, or actions, or conduct in particular; and that but in comparison of their wicked enemies, between whom and themselves, they appeal unto God, as the Judge; though they cannot bear to have any thing that they do tried in the strictness of his judgment. So the zealous fact of Phineas was 'counted to him for righteousness,' Psal. cvi. 31. And Rahab 'was justified' when she had received and concealed the messengers of God, James ii. 25. Not that the deed (though never so brave) could of itself justify such an ill woman; but it shewed, that God had wrought a work of faith and grace in her, or else she could never have done it: for she ventured her life in

it, and so preferred the glory of God, and the love of the brethren, before her own life and safety. So Nehemiah prayed to be remembered of God, for some good service that he had done; though at the same time (as to his person and his whole life) he prayed, 'Spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy,' chap. xiii. 22. So all the servants of God, that know themselves, instead of pleading merits, and claiming rewards, acknowledge guilt, and beg for mercy.

But we may stand amazed at it, and (with our Apostle, Gal. iii. 1.) ask, 'Who has bewitched them,' that any should fall from the grace of the gospel, so as to vilify Christ Jesus, and magnify their own works? 'This only would I learn of you,' (says he, ver. 2.) 'Received ye the Spirit by the works or the law, or by the hearing of faith?' Are you more beholden to your own works, or to the faith of Christ, that still you 'desire to be under the law?' chap. iv. 21. A strange desire, that men should long to put their necks again under the intolerable yoke, and seem to be proud of the old chains! like those Israelites, who in the same manner expressed their thankfulness for their deliverance out of Egyptian bondage, by murmuring that they were not there, at the garlic and onions again. Strange! that they should seek righteousness and life from that law which discovers their nakedness, and strikes them dead! that they

should think to force a way for themselves into heaven upon impossible terms! and to be justified by such works, as God's word tells us, 'no man living shall ever be justified by!' that they should still despise that gracious covenant of God in Christ, and hanker after the law as a covenant of works! and where they cannot come up to the law, yet (still to make it serve the turn for their justification) they will bring the law down to them; and (as the Pharisees of old) they will adulterate the sense, and make it so feasible, that they may be justified by it, without hanging upon the satisfaction and righteousness of Christ Jesus; like the 'many thousands of Jews,' Acts xxi. 20. 'that believed, and were all zealous of the law.' But be they never so many, and never so zealous, the Apostle did not matter their numbers, nor their zeal; which, he says, was 'not according to knowledge,' Rom. x. 2. But he roundly concludes, Rom. iii. 28. 'That a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law.' Those deeds (according to him) have no efficiency in the justification of a sinner before the God of heaven. And so saith our church, (Serm. of Salvat.) "No man can by his own acts, works, and deeds, (seem they never so good) be justified, and made righteous before God. But every man, of necessity, is constrained to seek another righteousness or justification, to be received at God's own hands." And what is that, but

the righteousness of Christ imputed? for it is in him, that God 'reconciles the world unto 'himself, not imputing their trespasses unto 'them,' 2 Cor. v. 19. but saving them from the malediction of the law, for the satisfaction made by his Son; that satisfaction made by his death, which therefore, in this business, is chiefly respected by our faith. And though we believe in our commanding Lord, to follow him; yet it is in our dying Saviour, that we believe, to be justified by him. And faith makes us righteous before God, by thus bringing us into the possession of Christ's righteousness; which becomes ours by an act of divine grace. And so according to that of St Bernard, "Man's righteousness is God's indulgence;" not a thing which he works by any doings of his own, but which he receives by favour from above.

Yet this doctrine will not be endured by them that are still for patching up a righteousness of their own, to do the work for their justification; and will not be beaten out of it, but that such tasks as they perform, and such hardness as they impose upon themselves, and such a life as they lead, must needs accomplish the business, to bring them off as clever as can be. Let Christ stand by the while, and do but make them a lane, and you shall see them run so excellently, that you cannot but own they deserve the prize. So do they swell with the conceit of their

own services, as if they should not only make amends for all their sins, but oblige God to save their souls. Such a high rate do they put upon their doings, that they trust to them more than they do to their Saviour; and he shall only have the name; but the works they look upon as their real favours. Instead of throwing down all at his feet, and looking for justification and acceptance only upon his account, he is last thought of, and least of all regarded, in all the reckoning: and, if possible, they will shift and do the business without him.

This is the Pelagianism, born and bred in the corrupt nature of every lapsed sinner. And where they deserve to be damned, yet they are challenging to be saved; and think themselves and their doings so considerable, that they wonder God takes no more notice of them, *Is. lviii. 3.* 'Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge.' They think themselves forgotten, or not attended according to their high merits; and begin to be angry and quarrel, if heaven be not paid them down, as the due desert of their works, and not as the purchase of the blood of Christ.

And herein some that are called Protestants, seem yet to be more Antichristian than Papists, i. e. greater opposers of the righteousness of Christ, and more haughty despisers

of his merits and satisfaction, in the business of their own justification and salvation; taking their own works to be satisfactory enough, without any satisfaction of his at all. And one would think, then, their works should be some very wonderful works, that they so stick to them, and lean upon them, and rate themselves by them: when, alas! there is nothing to be discerned in them, above those of their ordinary neighbours. Yea, some that make such a noise and cracking of their probity and works, come exceedingly short of others, whom they so superciliously disdain, and cry out of, for plucking up all good works by the roots. And after all the do that they make to 'establish their own righteousness,' the attempt is most silly, and wicked, and dangerous.

1. It is a most silly attempt; not only to set up that which really they have not; all their righteousness, when it comes under a strict examination, being even nothing, or not worth the speaking of; not only defective, but polluted; and (it may be) hardly so much as the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees: a pitiful business for men to trouble the world so much, in disputing and contending for! but it is to aim at unfeasible things, wherein they are perpetually baffled, and can make nothing of it. So saith the Apostle, of those here under censure, Rom. ix. 31. 'Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath

‘not attained to the law of righteousness.’ They were hard in the pursuit, (*Διῶκων*) tugging at it all their days; and yet it would never do. And he tells where they missed it, and how they miscarried, next verse, *Wherefore?* how came it to pass that they were so wretchedly disappointed? why, ‘because they sought it not by faith, but, as it were, by the ‘works of the law.’ They were resolved to hew it out of their own doings, though that would not do; and they would not be persuaded to look unto Jesus by faith, to help them out.

And yet still, how frequently do vain men follow them here? and will never take warning, but build their castles in the air, and bestow all their labour in vain, to seek the living among the dead, and rich ore among heaps of dust, and dirt, and rottenness. For before they are made alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord, alas! all their very best works, what are they better than dead works, and such as St Paul calls ‘lofs and dung?’ And yet this is the worthy stuff about which they keep such a pother, in which they so much confide and glory, and upon which they so erect their plumes, and advance themselves; and call the righteousness of our Lord, imputed, (in great scorn,) *a putative righteousness*; yea, *cant*, and *mummery*; and the faith in our Lord’s satisfaction, nothing but a sandy foundation. And nothing is more studiously load-

ed with all their disgrace, than that only refuge, which all men in their wits will at last be glad to fly to; priding and justifying themselves in the 'filthy rags,' which are 'abomination in the sight of God,' Luke xvi. 15. and making but a mock of the only thing in the world that should save them: and still so void of good sense, as to mistake the covenant of grace, for a covenant of works; when as they are so widely different, that the voice of the one is, 'Do this, and live;' and the voice of the other, 'Believe, and thou shalt be saved.' They will by all means be under the covenant of works; none can keep them off it. And there they keep the clutter, to set up that righteousness, which no man ever did, or ever shall find sufficient. When, after all, the gayest of them is not arrayed like one of the humble lilies, that neither toil nor spin, to weave an impossible web (spider-like) out of their own bowels. Thus the foolish virgins may make a flourish with their lamps: though when the bridegroom comes, the oil will be wanting; that grace which now they do not think worth the providing; nay, that grace of the gospel, which they put from them, and will not admit of it; because their own righteousness must be thrown down, for this grace to be set above it. Thus the 'god of this world blinds the eyes of them that believe not,' 2 Cor. iv. 4. And though they so stand in their own light, to reject the only Saviour;

yet they think they do well in it, and are very confident in the delusion. However, our Apostle labours to convince the world, that it is 'of faith, and not of works;' still they go on to contradict; and are as flat and peremptory in it, that it is of 'works, and not of 'faith.'

2. This attempt of establishing their own righteousness, is no less wicked than silly. It is a confronting the plain declarations of the gospel; as if nothing at all had been said, or they cared for never a word that our Lord speaks, to throw down all confidence in the righteousness of works, and to put men out of it, to take shelter in the righteousness of faith. How do they despise the wisdom of God in this gracious method of salvation by faith in Christ Jesus? and resist the authority of God, when he commands them to 'believe in 'the name of his Son,' to the saving of the soul? How do they trample the Son of his love, whom he gave to die as the propitiation for our sins, and not count him worthy to be relied on? Though he says, that believing in him shall secure us from perishing, and help us to 'life everlasting,' John iii. 16. yet they dare not trust to that, but think their own works are more to be trusted to, and that they have a better string to their bow. And so, like the Pharisees, Luke vii. 30. they 'reject 'the counsel of God against themselves,' and will have it their own way. Whatever he

has said in his word, if it do not jump with their preconceptions, and the systems that they have framed in their heads, it is all one to them, as if it had never been said. 'The bread which came down from heaven, to give life unto the world,' they set at nought, to feed upon the trash of their own imaginations; and 'tread under foot the Son of God, and do despite to the Spirit of grace,' in setting up a Paganish religion above all the gospel-revelation. And whom God hath sent 'to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness,' Dan. ix. 24. and to 'put away sin by the sacrifice of himself,' Heb. ix. 26. him they have little respect to; but run on with their old ramble, of attaining happiness, even in the same way as the Ethnic philosophers taught; as if they had better light and information from them, than from all the revelation of Jesus Christ; and look upon all that he has introduced afterwards, as superfluous, and they could do even as well without it. For it is but to lead an honest, sober, and good life; and that they knew well enough without book, if he had said nothing to them in his gospel. But as to their believing him the only begotten Son of God, yea, Jesus Christ, over all God blessed for ever; and that 'we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace,' Eph. i. 5. and that he was 'made sin for us,

‘that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,’ 2 Cor. v. 21. In these, and such like mystical matters of faith, they leave him, and desire to be excused; and would be left to the latitudinarian liberty, and not imposed upon, i. e. Let him say what he will, they will believe what they list. And so not only Socinus or Crellius, but Socrates or Epictetus, is more their master, than Christ Jesus. And what more impudent, blasphemous usage of the blessed Saviour of the world, than so to fly in his face, instead of believing in his name? and if not downright denying, yet so rudely handling the Lord that bought them; for which we must leave him to deal with them, when he shall come to call such his enemies to account as ‘would not he should reign over them,’ nor give the law of faith, as well as of works, to them.

3. This establishing their own righteousness, is as dangerous and destructive to themselves, as it is silly and ungodly in itself. For thus do they turn themselves out of all the blessed benefits which come by the Redeemer of the world. Seeing ‘Christ is of no effect to them, whosoever are justified by the law; they are fallen from grace,’ Gal. v. 4. Why, what if they be? they may hope to do as well without grace, if they have but the moral works. *Sit anima mea cum philosophis*, (in a sense worse than Averroes used it,) they may wish themselves with the old philosophers;

not so much to escape the scandalous lives, as the unintelligible faith, of Christians. The Gentiles divinity is even as wholesome to them as the gospel; nay, they find more edification in the honest Seneca, than in this mystery-monger, St Paul. There they learn the brave, noble resolution, enough to make their worthy good man; *unum bonum tibi fidere*; not to hang and depend on any other, but confide and trust to thyself only. To live all upon their own stock, that is the happy life. But O how will they get into that eternal life, where none but the righteous shall enter? Why, they are righteous, square, and upright; and that is enough for them. But I doubt, they will not find it enough to make them a title to the kingdom of heaven; 'into which shall in no wise enter any thing that defileth,' Rev. xxi. 27. And is their righteousness without defilement? Let them think as well as they will of themselves, I cannot think it is better with them, than with those people of God that complained, Is. lxiv. 6. 'We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.' And then where will they be, if they have no better than a filthy righteousness; and never a holy Saviour, with his 'white raiment, to cover the shame of their nakedness?' Rev. iii. 18. He counsels to 'buy it of him.' But whether they will be contented so to do, I cannot tell. Their own principle (it is doubt) will lead

them another way to work; neither to buy, nor borrow, nor any way to fetch it from Christ Jesus, who alone can present them 'without spot and blemish,' Eph. v. 27. but only to clothe themselves with somewhat that is home-spun; a righteousness made of their own works, i. e. (as the Apostle expresses it,) they will 'go about to establish their own righteousness.'

And then, when the Lord shall come, and find them no better clad, however they may pride it in such apparel, I would not be found in their coat for all the world. O at what a fearful loss will they be, when all that shall utterly fail them, wherein alone they did put their trust! O in what a case will they be to appear before the holy Judge, in none but filthy rags! in what preparation to enter the place of everlasting purities, when they were never washed and cleansed in the 'blood of the Lamb of God,' nor would ever be persuaded and prevailed with to take that course; but trusted only to the poor matters that they did for themselves, and looked no further than the tattered blemished righteousness of their own!

O may they consider this, who have hitherto been setting up their rest in 'works of righteousness which they have done,' though the Lord knows, what pitiful wretched stuff that is; and be well advised to look out yet further, before it be too late, that they may

be better furnished! or else what wrong will the Lord do them, to take them, even as he finds them, and let them 'eat of the fruit of ' their own way, and be filled with their own ' devices?' Prov. i. 31. If he leave them under the first covenant of works, where themselves desired to be, they have but their own choice. And in the dreadful day of judgment, if he lay all their sins upon their own score, and afford them not a drop of that blood of Christ, which they disdained to apply, for the taking off any, how can they complain of hard dealing, though they bear their sin, and shame, and smart for ever? for they have fixed upon the first covenant, where there is no Mediator; and none they would have; no, they cared not for him, but reckoned to do well enough, though they never had him.

And when we are 'accepted only in the ' Beloved;' and in him, they thought, there was no need for them to be found; O what acceptance can they expect at last! and what advocate to plead their cause? when their covenant requires perfect righteousness, and they have no such thing in them; and yet, for want of it, the condemnation will be just upon them. For God deals with them, but upon their own terms. And when he imputes their sins, and rejects their services, and reprobates their persons, and there is no surety to take up the matter, no Christ to screen them from the 'wrath to come;' why, all this

they have pulled upon their own heads: and it is no more than they had reason to look for, that the infinite scorn which they did cast upon the Redeemer of God's providing, should recoil, and for ever lye upon themselves; and that they who would 'establish their own 'righteousness,' and abide by it, should take what came of it; and be never the better for the Saviour, whom they would never betake themselves to, nor repose all their trust in him.

O take heed, Sirs, every one, who reads or hears this, that you sin not against your own souls, in sinning so against all the rich grace of the gospel; that you refuse not the best offer that ever can be made, of righteousness and salvation by the grace and faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. For 'how shall you escape, 'if you neglect so great salvation?' Heb. ii. 3. There is the last refuge; and 'there remains 'no more sacrifice for sin.' If you fail here, you lose all, and are gone for ever, past all hope of help.

Yet, Lord, what a leaven is there in corrupt nature, that will be heaving and rising against this method, of passing by your own righteousness, to lay all your expectation and salvation upon the righteousness of another? But never do you fear to take the way of God's opening to you, the way that he commands to be taken by you. O be more afraid of losing your share in the everlasting benefit! and

suppress and beat down every cross imagination that exalts itself above this wisdom of God, that has so provided in Christ Jesus for the salvation of the poor sinful world.

If 'where sin has reigned unto death,' God will have 'grace reign through righteousness 'unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord,' Rom. v. 21. O let it so reign! and do you rejoice in it, and greatly bless him for it; and withstand not the comfort, the heavenly hope, the everlasting consolation, which this brings to every believing soul. O do not, what in you lies, frustrate the death of Christ, and your own best evidence for eternal life, both together. 'For if righteousness come by 'the law, then Christ is dead in vain,' Gal. ii. 21. and if the satisfaction made by his death do not establish a righteousness on which to ground your sure hopes of blessedness, I know not how any righteousness of your own will ever be able to bear that superstructure.

O it is not in yourselves, Sirs, but 'in the 'Lord, that you have righteousness; and in 'him shall all the seed of Israel be justified, 'and shall glory,' Is. lxxv. 24, 25. And it is not by any obedience of your sinful selves, but by the obedience of God's holy One, that you are to be made righteous, (thus righteous in his sight,) Rom. v. 19. Never dare then to stand a trial in the court of the law; for there you will be sure to be cast and lost: but repair and fly to the chancery of the go-

spel, and take sanctuary under the covert of the Lord your righteousness and your Redeemer. O catch hold of the horns of that altar; and let nothing pluck you thence; but there set up your rest: and 'the life which you now live, let it be by the faith of the Son of God, that loved you, and gave himself for you,' Gal. ii. 20. And let not the works done by you, but Christ in you, be your 'hope of glory,' Col. i. 27. nor let any thing of your own, or any thing else in the world, be so much your rejoicing, as that: Is. lxi. 10. 'I will greatly rejoice in the Lord: my soul shall be joyful in my God. For he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness' There is the *decus et tutamen*, indeed: and that is a cloathing complete, which will both adorn you, and secure you. It will make you easy and comfortable now, and most glorious and blessed for ever. And then, instead of 'establishing your own righteousness,' you will be established on so sure a foundation, where you shall never be put to confusion, but be kept through faith to salvation; and enjoy the blessed end of your faith, in all the endless joys of everlasting life.

The third observation.

What a hinderance is pride to their happiness, who stand upon their own terms, and will 'not submit to the righteousness of God;'

they will not have it in his way, and they shall not have it in their own.

‘Have not submitted themselves.’ No, here it stuck with the Jews; they could not bring themselves to it. It seemed too great a condescension and abasement, for them, who, gloried so much in their law, as written with the finger of God, to go and seek their justification any where else. And as much goes it still against the grain, with such as dote upon the great Diana, their reason; and think there can be nothing superior to that law, which the same God has inscribed on the tables of their hearts. To be convinced, that this will not do, but they must stoop to a new remedy, to help them out; here pride of their own natural stock makes them so stiff, and stand it out, even to the death, against any thing that shall come to humble, and pull them down from the high opinion that they have of themselves. This they make the hideous outcry against, as a design to unman them, and to rob them even of themselves. If the gospel comes to cast down (*Λογισμὸς*) their reasonings, or ‘imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ,’ 2 Cor. x. 5. they are resolved to keep their manly perfection, and thank ye heartily; they will not so tamely part with their natural accomplishments, which are not only their treasure,

but their glory. If St Paul, and the rest of the apostles, (poor deluded creatures!) would be such 'fools for Christ,' 1 Cor. iv. 10. yet they have no mind to take that course, to learn wisdom, which he prescribes, chap. iii. 18. 'If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.' The wisdom of this world, though it be no better than 'foolishness with God,' ver. 19. it makes head against God's way of saving sinners, and counts it but a silly contrivance, even 'the foolishness of God,' chap. i. 25. And the world, with all its 'wisdom, knows not God,' ver. 21. i. e. not in the right saving manner. Though they know enough from his creation, to leave them without excuse, Rom. i. 20. yet they 'become vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart is darkened,' ver. 21. and they will not vouchsafe to learn the knowledge of God from his word; not to know 'God in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, and not imputing their trespasses unto them,' 2 Cor. v. 19. nor to know Christ Jesus, 'made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption,' 1 Cor. i. 30. tho' this be the most material and best of all knowledge that ever they can attain to, which the great and learned Apostle was so taken with, that he 'determined to know nothing else' among that people, 'but Jesus Christ, and him crucified,' 1 Cor. ii. 2. and 'count-

‘ed all things but loss, for the excellency of
‘the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord,’
Phil. iii. 8. and a branch of this knowledge
there, he makes to be the knowing of such a
‘righteousness as comes by the faith of Christ:’
yet neither this knowledge, nor this righteous-
ness, will down with them: because their
school of nature does not teach it, they stand
up therefore to oppose it; and, instead of sub-
mitting to it, they perk above it; and by all
means would batter it down, as not fit to sub-
sist, or be mentioned in the world, unless with
the utmost scorn and defiance.

And here some of our refiners, that may
think themselves much disparaged, to be cou-
pled with Quakers, yet shew that they are not
at such a mighty distance, but they can lov-
ingly shake hands together; for what the one
call reason, the other call the light within;
whereby the mean, in effect, the same thing
which both of them set up above the Christ
without, not only to vie with him, but to o-
ver-top, and so exclude him; and so lean to
their own understandings, and so abide by
their own imaginations, as to control his holy
word, instead of being controlled by it.

Now, pride keeps men off from ‘submit-
‘ting to the righteousness of God,’ 1. Because
they will not be so beholden to another. 2. Be-
cause they have too high a conceit of their
own righteousness. And, 3. Because they

have not thoughts low enough of their sinful wretchedness.

1. They are not for 'submitting to the 'righteousness of God,' out of pride, which will not suffer them to be so beholden to another. To go out of themselves, and fetch home righteousness from one, whom (it may be) they look upon but as their fellow creature; this is such a poor, precarious sort of living, as they count exceedingly below them. To be 'made the righteousness of God in 'Christ,' 2 Cor. v. 21. and to be perfect only 'through the comeliness that he puts upon 'us;' to be decked with borrowed plumes, and not 'accepted but in the Beloved,' Eph. i. 6. to be 'justified by faith in him,' Acts xiii. 39. and 'believing, to have life through his name,' John xx. 31. All this looks pitiful sneaking for men of parts, and men of worth, so to degrade themselves, and become such underlings to they know not whom. If now and then any of them bow the head, in a customary formality, to the name of Jesus; yet they are not for so bowing their souls to the righteousness of Jesus, and to be 'found in him, having the 'righteousness which is through the faith of 'Christ, i. e. the righteousness of God,' Phil. iii. 9. But as Herod and his men of war set our Saviour at nought, and mocked him, when arrayed in another's coat, Luke xxiii. 11. so these myrmidons make but a jest of one clothed in that 'white raiment,' which the Lord

counsels us to get of him. Like as a proud gentleman, though decayed, insists still upon his quality, and this and the other he scorns, and would keep up his port, and be as great as ever, when yet (poor man!) he has nothing to support and maintain the dignity; and so but makes himself the more contemptible, in refusing the helps which he might have, and aiming at the high things which he can make nothing of. Just such wise gentlemen in religion are they, that value themselves upon the pedigree and endowments of their rational nature, (however sunk and vitiated;) and will be so much men, that they cannot find in their hearts to be Christians, because they will be independent upon Jesus Christ, and so set up for themselves, that they need not truckle to him. No, they would not have you think, that it is yet so low with them, to come 'labouring and heavy laden' to him, and to cast their burden upon him. He 'came to seek and to save the lost.' True; but they are none of those. He shall stay for their submission, till they think it time to acknowledge that. And they shall stay for his salvation, till they do come down so to see and own it. For such rich ones, so full of themselves, he 'sends empty away;' and scorns the proud beggars, as much as they scorn the only Saviour. He chuses the 'poor of this world, rich in faith,' James ii. 5. which to them is such a kind of fanciful wealth, as only serves them to make

themselves merry with. The 'poor in spirit' he pronounces 'blessed,' and sure of his kingdom, Matth. v. 3. But these overweening admirers of themselves are too high-spirited, to take the kingdom of heaven as his sole purchase, and God's free gift: they will not be so base, to wear it, till they have won it: they are so high and lofty, as to soar up, and fly upon it, by the strength of their own noble faculties. And then what need to 'kiss the Son,' and all this cringing to Jesus Christ? Faith is the abasing and self-emptying grace, that sends us away, out of ourselves, to the 'Lord 'our righteousness,' Jer. xxiii. 6. therefore he that will not give his glory to another, will yet trust it to faith, rather than to any thing else that is in us: for it is a receiving from without; 'receiving Christ Jesus the Lord; and 'receiving the atonement, and abundance of 'grace, and the gift of righteousness,' by him, and from him. It is the poor empty pitcher that we carry, to be replenished out of his infinite fulness; our 'looking to Jesus,' as the Israelites to the brazen serpent; our coming to Christ, who calls us to him; and 'flying 'for refuge to the hope set before us,' Heb. vi. 18. being 'made righteous by the obedience of another,' Rom. v. 19. another fulfilling the law for us, and in us. And this our faith is 'imputed to us for righteousness, as 'Abraham's was,' Rom. iv. 24. but the im-

putation of Christ's righteousness to us for our justification.

It is (*foeda execranda, pernicioſa, deteſtanda*) a filthy, curſed, baneful, abominable doctrine, ſaith Socinus. The man was ſo full of bitterneſs and vengeance againſt the only way of his ſalvation, he pours out, as if he knew not what to ſay bad enough of it.

And hence we may learn, at what fountain the wild ſect among us have been dabbling, when W. P. and G. W. (in the *Serious Apology*, p. 148.) “pronounce, in the
“name of the Lord, juſtification by the righteouſneſs which Chriſt fulfilled in his own
“perſon for us, wholly without us,” to be
“the doctrine of devils, and an arm of the
“ſea of corruption, which does now deluge
“the whole world.” Such blaſphemy cannot be leſs harſh and hideous in all believers ears, than this kind of juſtification was in theirs. But when are theſe exalters of themſelves like to come down out of their altitudes, to fetch in righteouſneſs from another, though it be from the Son of God himſelf? However the ſcriptures tell us of ‘the unſearchable riches of Chriſt,’ Eph. iii. 8. all the inſcrutability to them is, that they know not what to make of ſuch treaſures. And though the ſame ſcriptures draw us to the great ‘author and finiſher of our faith,’ and throw us upon him as our life and our all, ‘in whom dwells all fulneſs,’ Col. ii. 10. yet to come

unto Christ, as poor bankrupts, that have not a mite of our own; in us no good thing to recommend us unto God; but expecting all from him, (as is the guise of faith and humility;) to confess we are unclean, and weak, and lost, and dead; and that Christ is our righteousness, our strength, our Saviour, and our Redeemer; yea, that we are worse than nothing without him, and that we have all things given us only with him, and in him: and if it is not our free will, but his free grace, that makes us to differ, how ill then will it beseem us to arrogate the glory of our Lord to ourselves? but, O! when will they so magnify Christ, and, as Rev. v. 13. think 'the Lamb worthy 'to receive all glory,' and in all things to have the pre-eminence, who are readier to side with the malevolent factions of proud rebels, that would spoil him of his Deity, his dominion, his satisfaction, and his righteousness, as the meritorious cause of our justification? of whose righteousness (in this case,) and of that only, all his humble retainers do make mention; and take all their happiness, as purchased by him, and not at all deserved by them. But this the enemies of grace, and the undervaluers of Christ Jesus, will never endure; because it spoils all the glorying and triumph in any thing of their own, whereof they are still so fond, and have it in admiration above all. And thus,

2. Pride hinders mens submitting to the

righteousness of God, by the high conceit they have of their own righteousness, as that which they think may pass very well, and serve the turn, without looking any further. Christ's righteousness, which is completely perfect, they put away from them; but their own, they would have imputed to them, as perfect, which is so extremely short of perfection; and seem confident also in the opinion, that God (whose judgment is according to truth) will yet make the same erroneous computation as they do. No doubt, but Paul himself, before his conversion, supposed such a sufficiency in his own righteousness, though, when grown a better man, he was less assuming; and, instead of depending upon any righteousness of his own for justification, disclaimed it all, 1 Cor. iv. 4. Phil. iii. 9. And here he blames his countrymen, for going about that idle, wretched design, to 'establish their own righteousness.'

But the sons of pride are quite of another opinion. And what righteousness (say they) should a man set up, but his own? would you have him to live upon an airy fantastical thing, that is none of his own? what good is that which is another's like to do him? Though an unclean leper should be spruced up in fine clothes, and a sinful creature covered with the mantle of a Redeemer, what the better? yea, what need has he to look out abroad, who is well provided at home? 'All these have I kept

‘from my youth up,’ said that forward young man, Matth. xix. 20. Thus do many still stand stroking themselves, and admiring the lives that they have lived; and seem to entertain this conceit of themselves, that they can deal with all the commands of God. And though they cannot (for open shame) but acknowledge some faults and failings in their obedience; yet, where they cannot stretch out their righteousness, to hold measure with the command, that is exceeding broad, there they will contract the command, so as to make it stand commensurate, and even no more than equal to their righteousness, by their worthy doctrine of acceptilation; that counterfeit coin stamped in the Socinian mint, without any royal authority of heaven, not upon the foundation of holy scripture, but their own fond conjecture; and all on purpose to evacuate and supersede the merit and satisfaction of our Lord Jesus Christ; that there may be no need of this, or any other compensation ever to be made to the justice of heaven, but only the sinner’s own repentance; which they take a deal of pains to prove sufficient, without faith in the Son of God. But still all their reasonings are without book, and run only on such a bare presumption as that of the Ninevites, Jon. iii. 9. ‘Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his anger, that we perish not?’ q. d. we do not know but God may absolve and justify

us, upon our bare repentance: but we have no assurance that he will. For to all the plausible allegations that raise our hopes, there are startling replications, to strike us down with fears; and no certainty ever to be had, but only from the divine revelation; and that (we are sure) does require not only 'repentance towards God,' but also 'faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ,' Acts xx. 21. And wherever repentance is singly named, yet faith must be supposed: for no true repentance, without godly sorrow; and no godly sorrow, but what flows from the sense of God's love; and what sense of his love, but through faith in the Beloved of his soul? for whose sake alone it is, that the holy righteous God is friends with believing sinners; and not only kind, but 'just, to justify the believers on Jesus,' Rom. iii. 26. The just Judge of all the earth was not to be instructed by these wise men, upon what terms to take sinners into favour. No: he has taken that way of satisfaction, which does not at all like them. Their master, who declares, "he would not believe a thing, because God says it, but because his own reason discerns the truth of it," is bold to give out, "that though this were expressly said, over and over in scripture, Christ Jesus satisfied God for our sins, he would not believe it." How then can we expect that they should be determined by the tantamount terms of 'propitiation, atonement,

‘ransom, redemption through his blood,’ (Λύ-
τρον,) the price given for our freedom; (Ἀντί-
λυτρον) undergoing a like infliction, as was to
light on the delivered; and ‘the just suffer-
ing for the unjust?’ But whether they be
pleased with it or no, God has better consult-
ed the honour of his law, and taken more care
to keep up the authority of his government, by
an inexorable justice done upon the Surety,
that stood in the sinner’s stead, though that
Surety were no less than the dear Son of his
eternal love.

And though they that judge of God’s ways
without God’s word, are of opinion, that there
was no need of a propitiation for their sins;
yet he has declared himself to be otherwise
minded; that ‘without shedding of blood
there is no remission,’ Heb. ix. 22. Nor is
it any manner of blood that will serve the turn
neither: ‘For it is not possible the blood of
‘bulls and of goats should take away sins,’
chap. x. 4. no, nor any sort of human blood;
not ‘the fruit of our body for the sin of our
‘soul;’ but it must be ‘the precious blood of
‘Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and
‘without spot,’ 1 Pet. i. 19. ‘the blood of
‘Christ, through the eternal Spirit, so offer-
‘ing himself to God,’ Heb. ix. 14. And by
that ‘offering he has perfected for ever them
‘that are sanctified,’ Heb. x. 14. It is not
their own sanctification, but his oblation, that
gives them the perfection. For God is well

pleased in his holy Son, that never did displease him, and pleased with the offending children of the Messiah, only for his sake.

It is true, he does 'accept the willing mind,' according to what they have, where the power of performing is wanting, 2 Cor. viii. 12. But then that acceptance must be understood to be ever 'in the Beloved,' through his merits, and upon his account. And good is the advice which St Cyprian gives to all, *Nec quisquam sic sibi blandiatur, de puro et immaculato corde, ut innocentia sua fretus, medicinam non putet esse adhibendam vulneribus.* "Let no
 "one entertain such a high conceit of the
 "cleanness of his heart, nor so value himself
 "upon his integrity, as to imagine, that he
 "has no need of cure for his wounds," to be healed with the stripes of his Saviour. But to this refuge, the high and lofty Socinians, and some of their associates, think there is no necessity to have recourse. No; they expect their own righteousness shall do greater feats for them, than all the righteousness of Christ. They will dare to plead their cause, and defend themselves, without him; as he said, the Pharisees did, Luke xvi. 15. 'Ye are they which justify yourselves before men.' They have it still, that all is done well enough by them, to make up a righteousness sufficient to do their business. And might not one then expect some superexcellent virtue in their righteousness above other mens, in which they

have such high confidence to do such mighty matters? when, alas! it is not a jot better for all the presumption; only themselves are still much the worse, so to contend and struggle it out, even with God himself, in their own justification. When thus they swell their mole-hills into mountains, they shall be mountains, indeed, big enough to stand in their way, to keep them from Christ, though not high enough to raise them to his heaven. No; he told such justifiers of themselves, who were so opinioned of their own worth and goodness, Matth. xxi. 31. that ‘publicans and harlots ‘went into the kingdom of heaven before ‘them.’ For such noted sinners will sooner be convinced, and come to repentance, and to faith in Christ, and so to heaven. But pride destroys even all that good which the others pretend to; and they are nothing sincere in it: for, behold his soul, which is lifted up, is ‘not upright in him,’ Hab. ii. 4. Such as stand so much upon their own endowments and abilities, will hardly ever ‘submit to the ‘righteousness of faith. How can ye believe,’ (saith our blessed Lord,) ‘who receive honour ‘one of another?’ John v. 44. And nothing hinders so much, as the honour which men think belongs to them for their righteousness: for it is not so much wealth, or parentage, or parts, that commends a man, as goodness does. This they look therefore most to be praised for, as owing all to themselves. *Propter vir-*

tutem jure laudamur, et in virtute recte gloriamur: quod non contingeret, si donum a Deo, non a nobis haberemus. Tull. This redounds so much to our honour, (say the patrons of nature,) because we have not this probity, as an infused quality; but we draw it out of our own treasure.

The disputers of this world are thus for wrangling themselves out of the righteousness of God; and there is no end of their cavils against it. While 'it pleases God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe,' 1 Cor. i. 21 they that are so conceited of their own righteousness, will never lose all the crop of praise and glory which they expect from it, to throw it down, as refuse stuff, at the feet of Christ Jesus. No; the very arguing of the Apostle for the righteousness of faith, that it 'excludes boasting,' even that fills them with such prejudice against it: Rom. iii. 27. 'Where is boasting then? it is excluded; by what law? of works? nay, but by the law of faith.' And therefore are they so much against this faith, because it is so much against their boasting trade. As the Jews could not tell how to imagine, that the Gentiles which 'followed not after righteousness, should attain to righteousness,' when themselves that 'followed after the law of righteousness missed it,' Rom. ix. 30, 31. so our Judaizing sort of Christians will never be persuaded, that the righteousness of faith, which they think

too easily come by to be honest goods, should do more than all the laborious righteousness which they hew out and fabricate themselves. How merry can they make themselves with St Ambrose his adumbration of Christ's imputed righteousness, by Jacob's recommending himself to his father, and carrying away the blessing, in his elder brother's clothes, of which he so well liked the perfume? I know the mighty disdain with which they look upon this righteousness; so that if they found it lying even in the way, they would scorn to take it up, unless to ridicule and expose it.

For the doctrine of imputation has, of some late years, grown a jest and derision, which ever before was owned and defended by all the most celebrated divines of our church, as the only orthodox opinion. One of the greatest and best of them that ever this church had, was not ashamed to build all his hopes of heaven upon it. And in one of his devout addresses to the Majesty on high, thus, does that sweet singer of our Israel, give his sense of the matter.

Hungry I was, and had no meat:

I did conceit a most delicious feast;
I had it straight, and did as truly eat,
As ever did a welcome guest.

I owed thousands, and much more;

I did believe that I did nothing owe,
And liv'd accordingly; my creditor
Believes so too, and lets me go.

When creatures had no real light

Inherent in them, thou didst make the sun
Impute a lustre, and allow them bright,
And in this shew what Christ has done.

HERBERT *of Faith.*

But now (as a champion for the opposite part told me) since the thirty nine articles were compiled, there has been a turn in our affairs. I suppose it may be, from the faith of the gospel, to the admired theology of old nature. And the divines that are ambitious to be thought modish, discourse now with quite another air, than what lies so plain in the articles of our faith and religion, which smell too much of the Cranmerian reformation. And therefore they make use of them only as a key, by which they are fain to enter into the church; but as soon as they have got possession, fall to preach them down, without mercy, as the greatest absurdity.

Though all this while, the self-righteousness in which they so ruffle and glory, (God knows,) is none of the thing which they would have taken it for, but a sorry, ragged, patched covering, not only full of cracks and flaws, but of such deficiencies and impurities, that it will never abide the test of God's holy, righteous law. And the highest pretenders to it are many times the least partakers of it, Prov. xxx. 12. 'There is a generation that are
' pure in their own eyes, and yet is not wash-

‘ed from their filthiness.’ We know of one that was as much his own spokesman as any of them, and set off himself in all the fine trappings of his own righteousness, Luke xviii. yet the success which he found does little encourage others to follow his trade: for his fellow-worshipper, that took quite a contrary course, (though looked upon as a worse man,) yet fared much better. The publican, that scarce durst look up to heaven, but ‘smote on his breast,’ and had nothing to say for himself, but, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner, went down to his house justified, rather than the other,’ ver. 14. Yet O how many still are for keeping up the Pharisee’s humour! And, alas! what is all the best righteousness they so much stand upon? What, but some common honesty, sober living, upright dealings, observation of some prayers, kindness to the poor, fair and plausible carriage to all? Things, it is true, very commendable in themselves; but yet such virtues as were found in many of the heathens; and peradventure, in a greater measure than these righteous men now do possess them. But still this is too short for the cover, and too weak for the cure of a sinful soul. All this while here may be no regeneration, no principle of new life, no heart right with God, no Spirit of Christ, none of the true holiness, without which no seeing the Lord. Instead of having these, they may reject them, as unnecessary preciseness: or though all these

were indeed superadded, yet still they are in such imperfection here, that the very best of mortal saints do see the continual need they have to fly unto Christ's merit and satisfaction, to help them out. But they that set up the righteousness of works, in opposition to the righteousness of faith, are so puffed and swollen with the proud conceit of their own righteousness, that they look upon it as full enough, and acquiesce in it, without seeking any further. And what need they any foreign righteousness, derived from the Saviour, when
“in every nation, he that feareth God, and
“worketh righteousness, is accepted with him?”
Acts x. 35. To which I shall here return Beza's remark upon that place: That among the Hebrews, the fear of God imported the whole of his worship; and because without faith it is impossible to please God; it appears therefore, that Cornelius, (to whom this refers,) though a Roman born, and now a proselyte of the gate, yet before his baptism, or his particular knowledge of Jesus to be the true Messiah, he was one of those faithful, who believed in Christ to come. I only add, that none being accepted but in the Beloved, we must therefore conclude, that he was called, and endued with the Spirit and faith of Christ: and so God approved of him, for that which, by his own grace, he had wrought in him. Yea, whosoever truly fear him, they do look upon him as propitious, and believe, that ‘there is

‘forgiveness with him,’ Psal. cxxx. 4. and therefore we may suppose, that he ‘reveals his ‘Son in them,’ and gives them that faith, without which none can be pleasing in his sight, Heb. xi. 6.

But they that presume they can do well enough without the Messiah’s help, now that he is come, if they were not too high to regard our Apostle, I should mind them of his wholesome admonition, Rom. xii. 3. ‘I say, ‘through the grace given unto me, to every ‘man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; ‘but to think soberly, according as God hath ‘dealt to every man the measure of faith.’ But still he talks so much of grace and faith, instead of works and self-righteousness, that he is not like to be heard by them, who are all for their own things, and therefore so much admire them, as better than any, because they are their own. Though herein they stand so much in their own light, as to withstand their justification in God’s sight: for the righteousness that indeed justifies us, must be complete, and must exclude boasting; and theirs has neither of these qualifications; therefore cannot avail to their justification. No; this is to be had another way; the way which they scorn to take, Acts xiii. 39. For ‘by the Son ‘of God, all that believe are justified from all ‘things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses.’

And there is a greater obstacle still in their way; and that is,

3. The want of low thoughts and humble sense of their own unrighteousness, and sinful wretchedness.

They never yet well knew themselves, or else they would have better learned Christ. They overlook, or else palliate, the grand apostasy; and therefore they have such slight thoughts of their recovery. As much as they do own of the natural corruption, they rather make it the excuse of their sins, than any matter of their humiliation. Pelagians and Socinians, that make so light of the fall of man, and the distemper of our nature, do make as light of the help and remedy; and fancy that any quacking receipts, and home-spun righteousness, will do for such an inconsiderable ailment. And as for the righteousness of Christ imputed, (that shadow of a dream,) they will sooner deride it, than ever desire it.

One of them, that pretends, in a late book, to correct all such extravagant errors with a high hand, well begins his account of Christianity, with the inquiry after Adam's fall. But I cannot think that he has given the world any good satisfaction, as to our sad losses in Adam, when he makes no more of all, but that we became mortal, and must die, and cease to be; and appeals to the common sense of men, that by death, is meant no more than

the extinction of life, and not a living in misery.

Now, if he perceive no worse hurt by the fall, yet he should not be angry with those that do groan under more grievous effects, and feel the old aches and mischiefs, the wounds and bruises, and putrifying sores all over to this very day; the darkness to truth; the dulness to good; the proneness to evil; the listlessness to healing; and even resistance of a cure: all which they cannot take to be any part of his work, who made all things very good; and therefore must lay the blame lower than at his door, and yet higher than the actual transgressions of the particular persons so ill affected. For that they appear to be thus vitiated, even before habits by their actions can be contracted; yea, to be ‘shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin,’ Psal. li. 5. and to bring such a corrupt nature with them into the world, as makes them the ‘children of wrath,’ Eph. ii. 2. and sure God would not be so offended at them, if they were but even as he made them, and there were no more to be objected against them, but that now they were become subject to the calamity of mortality. Alas! we are told quite another thing, from more authentic writings; Rom. v. 19. That ‘by one man’s disobedience, many were made (not only sufferers, but) sinners;’ and ver. 18. that ‘by the offence of one man, judgment came upon all men to condemna-

‘tion.’ And who that has well studied the holy scriptures, can take this condemnation to be no more than a temporal death? However the Right Reverend expounder’s new and soft sense of God’s wrath and damnation may as much oblige the Socinian tribe, as his opposition in other matters has distressed them; yet here I must beg leave to dissent from him and them. Though we know what is commonly meant by death in man’s law, he must be a great stranger to the law of God, that thinks no more to be meant by it there, where wicked men are threatened, that ‘if they live
‘after the flesh, they shall die,’ Rom. viii. 13. and asked, ‘why they will die,’ for want of turning? Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Why, let them live after the flesh or not, or tho’ they do turn to the Lord, they shall be sure however to die the natural death of the body. Sin, whether finished or unfinished, brings forth this death. There must be a further death meant therefore, James i. 15. even that cursed state, Gal. iii. 10. and that hell, which is made the portion of the wicked, Psal. ix. 17. which must intend a punishment beyond the grave: for into this all shall be turned, though they live never so godly, Psal. lxxxix. 48. ‘What man
‘is he that liveth, and shall not see death? but
‘some shall awake to shame and everlasting
‘contempt,’ Dan. xii. 2. And therefore, for all our Sadducees haste, when they die, there is not an end of them; nor does the immortal

soul then prove mortal too, (at which their doctrine seems to drive;) but they will be heard of again in a life of misery, which holy scripture calls the 'second death,' Rev. xxi. 8. 'The lake which burns with fire and brimstone, is the second death. And they shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever,' chap. xx. 10. Such as are condemned by the Judge eternal, 'shall go away into everlasting punishment,' Matth. xxv. 46. And our church is very express, (Hom. of Nat. and Pass.) that "man, by the fall, is not only become mortal, but a lump of sin, a bond-slave to the devil; are probate, cast-away, and fire-brand of hell; and, by the just judgment of God, condemned to everlasting death." Our Lord Jesus then did not come into the world, only to preserve men from non-entity, that they might not drop into nothing, but 'to deliver us from the wrath to come, 1 Thess. i. 10. This most dreadful everlasting judgment of God, is his wrath poured out upon the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction,' Rom. ix. 22. which, to save us from, was an errand and atchievement indeed worthy the blessed Son of God to come into the world upon. And they that take no notice of this, unless to contradict and cavil against it, if their law and their physic be no better than their faith and divinity, the world might not much be damnified, though they should scorn any further to oblige it with their practice.

We see, the knowledge of bodies and worldly estates does not presently give a man insight into the things that depend upon divine revelation. No; there is an unguent, which all their philosophical skill in nature cannot discover: and yet it helps even the illiterate to know all things pertaining to salvation, better, and more to the purpose, than many rabbies and scholars, that so much scorn and despise them; and that is ‘the unction from the ‘holy One,’ 1 John ii. 20. a learning that makes them know themselves, and their woful need of a Saviour; and makes them cry to him, in the anguish of their souls, (as ready to sink and drop into hell,) ‘Lord save us, or ‘we perish:’ we are ‘undone for ever,’ if thou be not our ‘strength and our Redeemer.’ When so many that seem much above them, are still of the Laodicean temper, Rev. iii. 17. to say, they are ‘rich, and increased with ‘goods, and have need of nothing; and know ‘not, that they are wretched, and miserable, ‘and poor, and blind, and naked.’ They believe not a word, what our church, (according to the holy scriptures,) Art. ninth, teaches, that “man is so very far gone from original “righteousness, that the fault, corruption, “and infection of nature in every person born “into the world, deserves God’s wrath and “damnation:” and that therefore we can never think to ingratiate ourselves with the Majesty offended, by offering any thing of our

own. But, as it is, (Art. eleventh,) “ We
“ are counted righteous before God, only for
“ the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus
“ Christ, by our faith; and not for our own
“ works and deservings.”

The rueful work which sin has made in our souls, to throw us into a state, not only of strangeness to God, but of enmity against him, batters down all the pride and confidence of such as seriously ponder and lay it to heart. And when we are once soundly convinced of our sin and misery, what a holy Majesty we have offended, and what an intolerable punishment we have deserved, sure we shall not presume, then, that we can save, as we have destroyed, ourselves; but shall be glad to take our reconciliation, as a precious favour, at the hands of that almighty Saviour, on whom God has laid our ‘ help, being justified freely by his ‘ grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ,’ Rom. iii. 24.

But men at ease, and never yet pinched and distressed with the grievous pressure of their sins, and God’s deserved plagues, are no competent judges of these matters, whatever otherwise are their abilities. In the heat of contention, they will rather scoff at them, and play with them, than put in for their share in the blessed benefit of God’s providing. They are subtle, and tortuous, and endless, in opposing the righteousness of God. Their stout stomachs know not how to admit of it. They will seek

all subterfuges in the world to avoid it. And if they can find any lurking hole elsewhere, they will never come upon their submission to Christ Jesus.

Indeed it is the great work of the Spirit of God, so to bring down the soul, and to 'convince the world of sin, as well as of righteousness,' John xvi. 9, 10. by a deep humiliation, to prepare men heartily to yield unto God's method of justification; to 'stop every mouth,' and lay 'all the world guilty before him,' Rom. iii. 19. to make them abhor themselves, and subscribe to the justice of Heaven, pronouncing damnation upon their sins; and make them renounce all hope of relief from any righteousness of their own, and to depend all upon the 'Lord their righteousness,' for justification in God's sight.

'The whole need not a physician,' but the sick at heart will be glad to hear of help. After they have been harassed with the terrors of the law, and pulled down with the spirit of bondage, and the conscience of sin has brought them to see, what a 'fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God,' then they will know how to prize the grace of the gospel, and the blessed news, that calls them to believe in him, that has satisfied the precept, and undergone the penalty of the law for them. When they have been groaning under the sore oppression, they will have little left to resist the heavenly grace, which bids

them 'cast their burden on the Lord.' Guilt awakened, makes men highly concerned; and indeed only the convinced sinner is capable to let this grace sink down into his heart. Such as are pricked at heart, bowed and broken with the burden of sin, will haste away for 'refuge to the hope set before them,' and look to Jesus, as the wounded did to his type, Numb. xxi. 9. Such as know God's glorious holiness, and their own sorry righteousness, will despair of themselves, and never venture, with their briers and thorns, upon a consuming fire.

But who so bold as they that are yet in their natural blindness, 'in whom the God of 'this world has blinded the eyes of them that 'believe not? 2 Cor. iv. 4. I cannot but call it blindness, for all their parts and learning: for Paul was not inferior to the best of them, for natural and acquired abilities; and yet could he see nothing of this righteousness, till humiliation had pulled down his heart, and conversion had opened his eyes. And he tells us, that 'the natural man,' (let him be never so profound for his politics, or mighty in his philosophy) 'receiveth not the things of 'the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to 'him; neither can he know them, because they 'are spiritually discerned,' 1 Cor. ii. 4. Cannot: and wherefore? (I beseech ye;) what is too hard for them to know, who think they see and comprehend all? Why, here he has

posed them, who was the most experienced person on both sides, and knew what could be done by the strength of nature, and what men can never have a sight of, without a spiritual eye, and God's grace, and light from above; to give them (as he expresses it, like himself, Eph. i. 17, 18, 19.) 'the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ: the eyes of their understandings being enlightened, that they may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his power to themward that believe.' This is a knowledge so sublime, that none of the great masters of reason, with all their sharpness, can attain to; and, therefore, are so apt to speak evil of what they understand not, because they were never yet thrown down, like Paul, and never 'taught of God,' and have not 'heard and learned of the Father, to come unto Christ,' John vi. 45. and so as yet they see no need of 'submitting themselves to the righteousness of God;' nor will they do it, till brought better to understand their own vileness and accursedness, till they have got that eye-salve to clear their sight, Rev. iii. 18. and (after all their boasted virtues) come to learn of Christ that meekness and lowliness of heart which would set them upon deploring the depravation and pollution of their nature, the deceit-

fulness and wickedness of their hearts, and those deadly wounds and damnable maladies of their souls, that require no less a remedy than the blood of Jesus, and the great salvation wrought by the Son of God. In the sense of which, O how well for them, if they would turn the proud boasting of their good deeds into humble bewailing of all their sins, and be taught of God himself, Ezek. xx. 43. to 'remember their ways and their doings, and loath themselves in their own sight;' yea, chap. xvi. 63. so 'remember, and be confounded, as never to open their mouths any more,' to speak one word in any self-vindication.

Thus I have shewed, how, for pride, it is that men stand off from 'submitting themselves to the righteousness of God.'

And now I would admonish all whom I can prevail with,

1. Not to have these men so in admiration, as to espouse their opinion for the way of righteousness.

2. Not to count a righteousness of your own needless to be possessed of, because you have need of another to trust in.

3. Yet, after you have done your best, submit to the righteousness of God, as ever you would have peace with God.

1. Admire not the exalters of their own righteousness, as likeliest to lead you into the way of righteousness, as if true goodness lay all on their side, and you must needs be with

them to find it: for there, peradventure, you may sooner find snakes in the grass, yea, and infidels in the dark, ‘transforming themselves ‘into angels of light.’ But there you may be miserably disappointed of that real righteousness, whereof they would be thought the sole possessors: for it is not mens much talking of it that presently entitles them to it: but it may be proper to inquire how they came by it, before we think ourselves obliged to acknowledge them endued with it; for how can ‘the corrupt tree bring forth good fruit?’ and trees of righteousness do not use to grow in nature’s garden. No; they must be transplanted, and altered by grace, before they can bear any thing pleasing to God. O what then shall we think of their righteousness and goodness, that make even as light as nothing of that transplantation and change made by conversion, and carry, as if they had been such as they ought to be, even all along from the beginning, and stand caressing themselves, and applauding the good that they still have done? so that, to talk to them of conversion, is an impertinent loss of your labour; for they seem to understand no conversion at all, but of heathens, infidels, or some very notorious sinners: when as, in truth, conversion is not only changing names and professions, but hearts and conversations. It is to be regenerate and made new creatures; to pass from death to life; and not only be civilized as to the exter-

nal carriage, but renewed in the very spirit of our mind, and saved from our worldly loves, and carnal minds, as well as from crying sins, and scandalous ways. And such a change, O how many that name the name of Christ, yet stand in as much need of as any that lye without the borders of Christendom.

But when I hear men, that are for short cuts to heaven, and for widening the way, which our Saviour calls narrow, crying, it is but so and so, and seem as confident, as if all were their own already, though still their praying is at as low an ebb as their believing, and world and flesh seem to have them as much under, as any other men; and to the means of grace, that should help us God and heavenward, (as scriptures, and sermons, and sacraments, and sabbths, and the daily exercises of piety and devotion,) they seem very cold and indifferent, and are readier to dispute them away, than to shew any zeal for them. I am ready to think with myself, if the religion of these men would serve the turn, as low as it is with me, I durst venture, with ease, to fetch out such a copy. And yet though I wrote fairer, and reached further than so, I should be afraid to trust my everlasting salvation upon it. Nay, I should suspect all my faith in Christ, by which I hope to be justified and saved, if it did not excite and enable me to do better than some that think they have done enough, and are good enough, when yet they lye far short of

those believers in Jesus, against whom they have so many articles, for their loose opinions, destructive of all good conversation.

Alas, who use to throw the righteousness further from them with their hands, than some that stiffliest plead for it with their tongues! shewing much more concern for others holiness than for their own. And we should be very forcibly taught, if we had no better patterns to learn it from; when even the inherent righteousness, upon which they hang all the weight of their salvation, yet such an ordinary attainment do they make of it, that a heathen man, or an unregenerate sinner, might undertake to reach and accomplish as good a righteousness: for regeneration they treat as a child of the imagination; and only for the sport that it gives them, they might pass it over in deep silence. Belike they may not think themselves concerned in our Lord's determination, Matth. xviii. 3. 'Except ye be converted, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' And, John iii. 3. 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Yea, for (that which is their pride) the very morality, yet I know the case, wherein they can make it a dispensable quality: for I have heard some of them fetch off an egregious swearer, drunkard, or scandalous liver, for a very good, honest man, of whose happiness they seemed not to make any doubt, because they were persuaded he meant no hurt, but only had such fail-

ings. And, at that rate, as loose as they count our doctrine of faith in Christ, we may say of their self-righteousness, 'Wide is the gate, and broad is the way; who almost can miss it? They are indeed the quickest operators to relieve a troubled conscience. And if what they lay down would but serve the turn, it were the easiest matter in the world to do that which Elihu, Job xxxiii. 23. took for the work of an 'interpreter, one among a thousand, to 'shew unto man his uprightness;' to point out that which will be a convincing evidence of one's title to the kingdom of heaven.

But, however the righteousness of faith may be charged as destructive of good life, (and let others take their liberty to judge as they find;) as far as my own experience reaches, I must needs testify, that I know no such holy, humble, charitable, heavenly livers, as some of these censured believers. And many that live and lean by faith on the Son of God, have much more of the goodness to shew in their conversations, than others that would ingross it all to themselves in their disputations. Nor can I so admire any, even the best, of the Socinians, as to think they do exceed, or come near to equal our holy reformers, who yet were the known maintainers of this doctrine of faith, and even built the reformation upon it; and as they lived great examples to honour it, so they died faithful martyrs to assert it. And they that cry, it is no

thanks to the doctrine, if some mens conversation under it be as becomes the gospel, talk like those that do not 'know the truth as it is 'in Jesus,' nor what an operative principle is the faith of Christ to produce all the fruits of a godly life: for if indeed I do believe in him, as dying for my sins, and making my 'peace 'through the blood of his cross,' how can I but love him, yea, love him the more, the more I believe he has done on my account? and I cannot love him, but I shall set myself to please him; and then, sure, am I like to do him more ingenuous and acceptable service, than when I work only as a slave for dread, or as a hireling for wages.

I know the Papists also traduce ours for a loose religion, because we teach this justification by faith only: and yet how often have we seen the loose livers among us run over to them for ease, and such hopes in an ill way as we could not give them? If faith in Christ be any part of our goodness, (as I cannot but think it is, because God has commanded it, and promised everlasting life to it,) is it not enough then to bring the whole pretension of their goodness under suspicion, who make so bold to explode and ridicule this faith, as a thing of more mischief than benefit to the world? And they that use to be so saucy with gospel-mysteries, do not afford faith any more civil usage, but that which St Paul calls the mystery of faith, 1 Tim. iii. 9. it is doubt, is

still such a mystery to them, that when they make it their bauble to play with, and their eye-fore to rail at, they jeer and they strike at they know not what. But if the well living greatly depends upon the sound believing, the *cre-
denda*, then I think, ought to have a fair treatment, as well as the *agenda*. And if some did believe of our Lord Jesus as they should, they would shew a little better manners, and more reverence to him, than they do. And as he commended the centurion, Matth. viii. 10. 'I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel.' I wish I could not say it, to the reproach of some, that would thrust themselves for shelter under our Israel, I have not found so great infidelity no not in Rome; where an honourable author (in his acute way) has long since told them, they make a jest of Christ's three offices; yet they have not gone about to plunder him of his eternal deity, and his infinite satisfaction, on which depends all our justification here, and our salvation for ever.

But they that can allow and plead for the worshipping of our Saviour, and yet tell us, we need not concern ourselves, whether he be God or not, would thus run us upon the same absurdity, as he condemned in the Samaritans, John iv. 22. 'to worship we know not what;' yea, to give the glory of God (for ought we know) to a creature. And then we are like to be good livers, when such foul idolaters. But (after all the ostentation) I

should not doubt to find as good life and morals, yea, as good righteousness and religion, as theirs, even among the old Ethnic philosophers. Nor do I question but St Paul, who was as great a scholar, was also as good a liver as Socinus; yea, how incomparably better? and yet he believed, that 'Jesus Christ was over all, God blessed for ever,' Rom. ix. 5. and that we are 'justified by faith in him, without the works of the law;' yea, by faith, in contradistinction from works, Rom. xi. 6. 'If it be by grace,' (says he,) 'then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work.' And of this faith and doctrine, it is most evident, he was a most zealous promoter. They therefore that asperse it, as tending to ill life, and dissolution of manners, must needs reflect on him, as a very shallow preacher, or none of the best liver.

But sure it can be no part of their goodness to justify themselves, and pride it in their own righteousness, and remain too sturdy, ever to 'submit to the righteousness of God,' and wriggle themselves out of that meekness of faith, which his word makes their duty, as much as the holiness of life. But be it his word, never so plain; yet if they say it is not, but only our interpretation, that shall be their warrant to reject it all, and cry, it is against reason, and against good life; and therefore

they are wiser and better than to hear talk of it. When I thought, it had been good reason to 'submit to God's righteousness,' though it might seem a disparagement to our own, and not set our weak reason to brisk up itself above his revealed pleasure. And I thought good life had been in no danger, by accounting his righteousness better, and fitter to be confided in, than our own. But some would make us think they are of opinion, that the talk of a good life is all, when we can see as little of it among them, as with other men. And most of their zeal (as far as they commonly make it appear) is shewed, to fright men out of their faith, and 'submission to the righteousness of God,' and to inveigh and rally against the believing in Jesus, tho' it be to the saving of the soul. But the Lord fortifies his faithful people against all such, Is. li. 7, 8. 'Hearken to me,' (and not to them,) 'ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law: fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings: for the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.' And, chap. liv. 17. 'The righteousness of my servants is of me, saith the Lord:' and if it be of God, it shall surely stand, whoever go about to disannul it; and if it be according to his word, for certain it is holy, and tends to his glory,

whoever spit their venom to blaspheme it. They take the wrong way to advance their opinion, or their reputation, with the believers on Jesus, when they are for stifling faith in Christ, to make mention of their own righteousness, even their own only.

But while others run down faith, to exalt good life, we would not (for reprisals) throw down good life to set up faith. Therefore,

2. Let none count a righteousness of their own needful to be possessed of, though they have still need of another to trust to. You must throw by your righteousness, as no foundation for you to build upon; but never must you throw it away, as the garment which you are to be continually cloathed withal. Though your title to heaven must not be laid all upon it, yet there is no good hoping for heaven without it; no, nor any living upon earth; but you will lose yourselves, and expose the faith of Christ, by your means, to be evil spoken of. And 'dead flies in the precious ointment,' will give it an ill savour, and just offence, to open the blasphemers mouths. Here then must you be exceeding full of care; to walk circumspectly, as well as to believe assuredly; and to lead a life becoming your faith; that you may not only have the 'witness in yourselves,' but may have others also abroad to corroborate the testimony, when they see the fruits springing out of the root in you; and, from your light shining before men, must be constrained

to confess you are illuminated with the beams of 'the Sun of righteousness.'

I confess, it is vain to talk of driving some men out of their own righteousness, that which indeed they never had; but such must rather be taught, that 'except they repent, they shall perish;' and that they must turn or die, as well as believe and live: for faith is the flight of a convinced sinner to the holy all-sufficient Saviour; not only to be justified and preserved from damnation, but also to be sanctified, and made 'meet for the inheritance of God's saints' in the heavenly glory. And I must tell you, that your own righteousness and holiness is as necessary, as your salvation and everlasting blessedness; for 'the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God,' 1 Cor. vi. 9. And 'without holiness, no seeing the Lord,' Heb. xii. 14. Conversion, and becoming new creatures, and walking after the Spirit, and having the conversation in heaven, these are all such indispensable qualifications, that a man must have a faith against all the word of God, who can make account to get to heaven without them.

And I shall little regard the peace of mind that any do arrive at, in an idle, prayerless, or licentious way of life; for thus men may snatch the stolen goods, which one day they shall answer and smart for, and find all the fine security turned into the shadow of death; and, by grace or hell, be awakened into la-

mentation, and weeping, and wo. They may so bribe or baffle conscience for a while, even when the 'wrath of God abides upon them.' But though they cry peace, and all well, when they know not, or mind not, what is amiss, he will bring them to another reckoning, and not hold them guiltless, that can so easily absolve themselves: and if there be not grace and holiness, there will be no peace and happiness. Though upon the right believing depends so much our holy living here, and our eternal life hereafter; yet, as we must secure our salvation in the hands of our Saviour, so must we justify and adorn our profession in the sight of every observer. However true piety, as well as faith, leans upon Christ alone, (for he is made unto us sanctification, as well as redemption;) yet, wherever his gospel in power is received by faith, it will produce the fruits of a godly life. So that they are no true believers, but false hypocrites, who are wicked livers; nor are they sound in the faith, that abound not in its holy fruits: for Christians are not to be distinguished from heathens, only by their orthodox opinion, but also by their exemplary conversation, else will they be found in worse case at last, even than those that were without Christ.

To contend for his faith is a duty. True, but it is not all: nay, to cry it up in words, and dash it down in the life; to flatter his person, and trample his commands, is not to

believe in him, but to rebel against him. Believers 'are created in Christ Jesus to good works,' Eph. ii. 10. and 'the mystery of faith is to be held in a pure conscience,' 1 Tim. iii. 9. But faith is spurious, and none of that justifying faith we contend for, if it be not a holy faith, and such a principle of holiness as purifies the heart, and works by love, and is fruitful in good works. To Christ indeed, and to him alone, belongs all the honour of our salvation: but then we must keep up the glory of his grace, without overthrowing the authority of his government: and where we cannot work to deserve heaven, (that we need not do, when he has done it for us;) yet must we use the means, and take the way he has appointed, to that salvation, which he has merited. Nor will he that works all our works in us, perform our duties for us; nor will God forgive and save us, without the terms on our part fulfilled: however, by his grace it is, that we do perform them; and to him we must seek still to enable us for the performance. And as we must borrow from another the righteousness which excludes all confidence of boasting; so we must have in ourselves the righteousness which excludes all boldness in sinning.

This then may confound the presumption of such as think it enough to hang all upon the righteousness of Christ, though they cast behind their backs all the precepts of Christ.

And so indeed they would establish not their righteousness but their wickedness, and make their faith in the Saviour of the world, their patent to affront the holy One of God; whereas Christ's righteousness is no asylum for such bold traitors; but it is a sweet resort for all frail offenders. It is not for those that will not set themselves to walk in his holy ways; but for such as do what they can, yet still find they come short, and offend in many things. The penitent believers, whose desire, and care, and endeavour, is to 'live godly in Christ Jesus,' though still they are so faulty, they criminate and condemn themselves; yet he will answer for them, and bring them off: but the obstinate sinners, who put themselves under the banner of another commander, and set their hearts upon the world, and their lusts, and make no conscience of the holy duties which the gospel gives them in charge; though they be never so confident, that Christ shall save them, he will shake them off, and never own them, but pass the sentence of condemnation upon them.

Repentance, then, and righteousness, and holiness, and all virtuous and godly qualifications, are so absolutely needful, that there is no good to be done, no heaven to be had, without them. No; it is vain, it is impudent, to look for a blessed end in a wicked way; when as the Saviour himself will not save us in our sins, but from them, i. e. not when we con-

continue impenitently in them, not unless we contrive and strive to forsake them. 'Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of the wicked things forbidden, comes the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience,' Eph. v. 6. He has 'revealed it from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, that hold the truth in unrighteousness,' Rom. i. 18. And he that is 'angry with the wicked every day,' will never allow of wickedness in any man. No; the righteous Lord loveth righteousness; his countenance does behold the upright,' Psal. xi. 7. And 'he that does righteousness, is righteous, and is of God,' 1 John iii. 7, 10. It is not talking of it, or pretending to it, without doing it, that will prove you to be possessed with it, and owned of the Lord. And if you are not sincerely righteous, with a righteousness inherent, you will never be able to make it out, either to the world, or to your own consciences, that you are completely righteous with a righteousness imputed; for from this righteousness evermore flows the other.

But it may be asked, what need is there of this righteousness of our own, if we be justified by the righteousness of another? Nay, if God justifies the ungodly, may not we even cast away the care of piety, and live at large, how we please, if we do but believe in Jesus Christ, and persuade ourselves, that his righ-

teousness shall set us right with God, and bring us safe to heaven? And then is not this a doctrine like to make good work to reform the world, and turn sinners apace to the Lord? How could you fit the humour of ungodly men better? and do not you thus give even the vilest wretches the halloo, not only to run on, but to abound in all iniquity, that they may reap the abundance of grace, and make all even, by the cheap and easy way of faith; to believe that all their work is done, and they may then take their ease, and fear nothing?

I bewail it, that this is the common use many do make of all the rich grace of the gospel. Thus they stumble at the corner-stone, and dash themselves, to their own destruction, against the very rock upon which is to be built all our salvation. Thus the holy One of God shall be made the pander of sin, and reliance on Christ, the warrant to rebel against the Lord.

Now, both to stop the mouths of such as blaspheme the righteousness of faith, and are ready to cry out even of the chosen vessel for running loose with unfavoury doctrine; and also to stop the way against the beasts of the people, that are ranging about, to seek any gap where they may break loose, to out-run their duty; I must here give my pen liberty to flow down in a measure beyond the pro-

portion observed in the other parts of this discourse.

And this cavillation having more in it of sophistry than honesty, and using to arise rather from that perverseness of spirit which holds the truth in unrighteousness, than from the real want of understanding, how to make a better use of it; and growing not so much upon a weak, as a wilful mistake of the design of our Saviour's coming, and of the nature of that true faith which gives us the saving interest in him; I shall think I have done enough to rescue the truth out of ill hands, and to satisfy all just exceptions, in capitulating with the objectors, and endeavouring to set them right as to those two points, and to cut off the occasions of wresting and perverting them to their own vile and vicious purposes.

1. Though I dare not limit the design of our blessed Saviour's coming into the world, only to his preaching righteousness, and living and dying an example of all virtue and piety, in his continual doing good, and patient bearing evil, and leaving the rules of holiness for us to follow; however holiness has been well proved to be the design of Christianity, in a noted book, (which also speaks the pious design of the right reverend author;) yet it seems with good advice, that ONLY was pinched out of the title of that book in the latter edition: for wo to poor guilty lost sinners, if Christ Jesus had no further end to a-

tone for their guilt, and deliver them from the deserved curse, to give himself for their ransom, to make their peace with heaven, and to purchase them an eternal blessed inheritance there. This wonderful kindness and love of God our Saviour, must never be overlooked and forgotten: yet, at the same time, must we remember, that he had a design upon us, to renew us, as well as to redeem us; yea, to redeem us from the slavery of sin, as well as from the misery of hell; to turn us from our iniquities, and raise us above this world, and so to fit us for a better, after he had set us right in the court of heaven, to make us also meet for the kingdom of glory. Indeed his design (as one ingeniously says) was not upon our names, so much as upon our natures; not to raise a generation that should be called Christians or believers, but to make them such manner of persons, in all holy conversation and godliness, as should be to the praise of his grace, and ‘adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things;’ to cure the deadly diseases of our souls, that pulled us down to the ground, and made us ready to drop into hell; yea, to restore us to health and integrity, and ‘renew us after the image of him that created us,’ that we might be capable of communion with him here, and the blessed fruition of him for ever.

But O how do they mistake the Redeemer, who take him for their servant, only to carry

them to heaven, but no Lord to order them in the way leading thither! yea, their slave to serve with their sins, and give them boldness to go on in their trespasses, because he has brought sufficient remedies; and more despitefully to use them, the more he has done for them; as if there were no more in his salvation, but just to save them from hell, without any further ado, whether ever they be changed and renewed by his spirit or no; and Christ must take them with all their treasons and rebellions, and save them, whether they will or no, though they run on quite wide of, and contrary to his way of salvation. So ill have they learned Christ, who think no better of him than as a protector of wickedness, giving men leave to live as they list, yea, giving any the uncleanest sinners hopes of salvation, that will but talk of their good faith: when, as he was 'manifested to destroy the works of 'the devil,' 1 John iii. 8. and 'gave himself 'for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us a peculiar people to himself,' Tit. ii. 14. He died for sin, that we being 'dead to it, might live unto righteousness,' 1 Pet. ii. 24. and to make us such a sanctified sort, that he might not be ashamed to call us brethren, Heb. ii. 11. yea to make us so 'pure in heart, that we might see God,' Matth. v. 8. to turn our hearts against the corruptions which they were set upon; and to make that holiness, which was our greatest

eye-sore, become the most amiable beauty in our eyes; to save us from the curse, but not from the obedience of the law; to throw down our idols, that he might be chief and uppermost in our souls, and reign over us, till we should be fit to reign with him.

Though he came to ease us of the load of our sins, yet not to discharge us from all the care of our duty; not to call us to a lawless condition, but to take his yoke upon us, and submit to his government and discipline over us, and resign up the right even of ourselves to our Lord Redeemer; to be, and to do, as he by his word shall order us; yea, and order even the secretest workings of our hearts, not leaving so much as our thoughts free; and bringing all desires, intentions, and motions, subject to his controul; so making the heart-adultery, and mental malice, and pride of spirit, to be as much sins, even as any that break forth into outward act.

Indeed he gives not only hopes, but assurance to all believers, who repent and are converted, that their 'sins shall be blotted out,' Acts iii. 19. But then whatever we believe, he tells us, that 'except we repent, we shall 'perish,' Luke xiii. 3. 'The Saviour himself will not save us without repentance; and 'except he wash us, we have no part in him,' John xiii. 8. We shall not be justified by his blood, nor glorified in his kingdom, if we be not also regenerated by his Spirit, and sanc-

tified by his grace. 'He is the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him,' Heb. v. 9. Ay, but instead of saving, he will 'destroy those his enemies, that would not he should reign over them,' Luke xix. 27. He is the Physician to heal all our diseases: it is true, but not if we slight all his prescriptions. Our 'being in Christ Jesus,' frees us from condemnation. So we are assured, Rom. viii. 1. But then that inbeing must be proved by our holy walking, 'not after the flesh, but after the Spirit: for he will not save us in the way of our lusts, and in the way of this world, but in the way that he went, and in the way of his word. He has indeed provided a remedy even for the worst, but they must come into the prescribed way, and they must take it in due time. There is a door of hope, and the kingdom of heaven opened to all that repent and believe; but shall they 'escape by iniquity,' that do as bad as the worst, and yet reckon to be saved with the best? They that are mad upon their lusts, and grown old in their sins, and scoff at holy persons and duties, that talk of nothing above the world, and fashions, and fooleries, that ramble about after drink and meat for their lusts, and scramble and tear for the world, and live, as it were, in spite of the gospel, do they think to make all whole, by telling of their part in Christ? even those that are not fit to live among honest men upon earth, such as shamefully fail

in the very lowest rank of works; (and one might expect better usage from many of the heathens, than from such Christians;) do they presume thus straight to grow up into a fitness for the eternal dwelling with the holy God and his saints in heaven? They that are so close sifted, they will give even nothing to the poor, and carry as if they were no stewards to dispense out what they possess, but perfect proprietors, to do with it what they list; they that have no government of themselves, to conquer their brutish lustings with temperance, nor their passionate resentments with patience; yea, that throw themselves upon the very mouth of temptations, and are ready to catch up all the baits of sin, even as fast as the tempter casts them before them; the unconverted, that yet lye dead in their sins; the unsanctified, that are still strangers and enemies to holiness, that no more desire to be saved, than the devils do, i. e. only from torments, and, at the highest, aim at nothing above pardon, and freedom from hell: are they in the right way to heaven? and do they stand fair for the salvation of Jesus Christ? O how silly, yea, and impudent is their claim to him? Though they 'name his name,' if they 'depart not from iniquity,' what shall they have from him, but 'Depart from me, ye that work iniquity?' How poorly shall they come off, who expect he must own them, for calling, 'Lord, Lord,' when they never applied themselves to do his

will? Matth. vii. 23. when he had only the name, but the world and lust had all the service. They are like to find him a Lord then by his judgments, though he could not find it by their carriage. He will be as dreadful as ever he was contemptible to them, and make the enemies his footstool, that would not be persuaded to make his gospel their rule. And according to works, will he pronounce the standing sentences of judgment at the last day, when every one shall 'receive according to what he has done in the body,' 2 Cor. v. 10. and Matth. xxv. saith the Judge to some, 'Ye did so and so;' therefore 'come ye blessed;' and to others, 'Ye did contrary; therefore 'depart ye cursed.' Though heaven's blessedness (it is true) the most righteous have not deserved; yet so we are taught, how the persons must be qualified, for whom it is prepared. As indeed all the promises in the law, if ye do so and so, ye shall be blessed, do not shew those works to be the causes of the blessings, but the qualifications of God's servants, for whom those blessings are designed. And therefore, as to the proportions, he distributes them how he pleases, and not just as might seem equal in our eyes; giving to them that came in at the eleventh hour, as much as to them that had laboured from the third, Matth. xx. 9. that he might let them know it to be not purely the reward of the work, but the free gift of his grace. And though none shall

be saved for his works, yet shall the works be called over, and inquired after, rather than faith, in the judgment; and every one shall be tried according to them, because only their good works can shew their real faith, and interest in the Saviour of the world: and works being more public than faith, to be seen by all, (as the superstructure lies more open to beholders eyes than the foundation,) the public sentence before the world will therefore be passed thereafter.

For in the visible church, even all pretend to faith; but then it will be put to the trial, who indeed had it? And then the two grand parties of godly and ungodly, that divide the world, the seed of the woman, and that of the serpent, such as live after the flesh, and such as live after the Spirit, shall find a doom as different as heaven and hell, though many of them now joined in the same articles of faith, and went, in the common tale, as all alike. Nay some, that are not such notorious sinners, as every eye sees, nor every tongue cries shame of their courses, yet will not find Christ their Jesus, nor the Saviour of the world a Saviour to them, if they be not holy and heavenly, as well as honest and orderly; if they be not inwardly changed and purified, as well as outwardly fair and civilized.

Indeed all that are effectually redeemed by him, will give themselves to live holily to him. And of all he does require holiness, though

not perfect to merit heaven, yet real, to prepare them for it. Nor will he save any, but whom he sanctifies. In good truth, our sanctification is a very part and beginning of his salvation. So that before we shall find our souls in heaven, we must feel the workings of that salvation in our souls upon earth. And before we are numbered with his saints above, here we must be adapted to their inheritance, and shew their holy properties, as ever we hope to enjoy their heavenly privileges. Tho' our righteousness is no supplement to fill up any thing wanting in Christ's sacrifice, yet it is the terms of our receiving its blessed benefit. And though we need not obey to the end that he did, yet are we bound to obey, as the creatures of God, and the redeemed of the Lord; and must walk in the way of holy duty, to his heavenly glory; yea, and strive for it, as ever we would enter, though that be no meritorious cause of our entrance.

No pretended affiance in Christ Jesus, then, will avail, without the new creature. And why are we made new creatures, but that we should walk in newness of life? So that every one is not straight to set up for a saint, who has but a good opinion of himself. For O how many do make the good profession of religion, that, like the cypress-trees, are only fair, but fruitless! and yet the Saviour himself has doomed 'every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, to be hewed down, and

‘cast into the fire.’ He never came to effect for us a justification separate from sanctification; when they are indeed no more to be parted, than light and heat in the sun. But as ‘the gift of the free grace of God is our ‘justification,’ Rom. iii. 24. so ‘this is the ‘will of God, even our sanctification,’ 1 Thess. iv. 3. And he that makes us perfect through the comeliness that he puts upon us, Ezek. xvi. 14. in giving the Lord our righteousness for an endowment unto us, also puts his Spirit within us, ‘causing us to walk in his statutes, that we may keep his judgments, and ‘do them,’ Ezek. xxxvii. 27. Nor must we seek unto him, only to have the pain of our broken bones eased, but to have them right set, that we may use our legs, to walk in his ways. And justification is not so needful to reconcile us to God, but sanctification is as needful to bring us to enjoy him. The former puts out the burning inflammation that afflicts us, and the latter puts a stop to the spreading infection that would kill us.

The Redeemer, indeed, makes us a way to escape; but it is a holy way, not of such a latitude, as any the loosest sinners that are called Christians might enter. No; he came not to make it wider, but to make us holier; to strip us of the cumbersome lusts and passions, that would hinder our entrance at the gate of life. Thus then must we take Christ, if we would not mistake him, and go without the saving

benefit by him. And as the true mother was against dividing the child, so the true Christians will be against dividing the Saviour, and take him for a teacher, ruler, and sanctifier, as well as a Redeemer; and to redeem them now from their vain and vicious conversation, as well as hereafter from God's wrath and everlasting damnation; yea, to purify, that he may glorify them, and bring them to live in this world so holily to him, that he may advance them in the next to live for ever blessedly with him.

Again,

2. Though we are saved through faith, yet it must be more than a faith in conceit that will help us to a heaven in earnest. It is not only to shift opinions, and to go over to the party of another persuasion, and there reckon upon ease and rest, (as at Rome, where bad men may be good sons of the church, and, by professing to believe as the church does, entertain a confidence to be saved, as sure as ever man was.) Such as hang all upon a bare empty faith, without the good and godly practice, do quite mistake the nature of that true faith, which gives us the saving interest in our Lord Jesus Christ. And I confess, that no mistakes in religion are more rife and pernicious, than those about faith; some throwing it so low, as to signify just nothing; and others stretching it so wide, as to swallow up all duty else. Though so few have the jewel, and our

Lord questions, where it will be found at his coming, Luke xviii. 8. yet almost all lay claim to it, as if every breast were the cabinet to inclose it; even the worst men will boast of their good faith within, though they have nothing good without to shew for it. When they hear there will be no heaven without faith, they are loath to give up all their salvation, for want of that believing, which they count so easy a performance. And though they cannot endure the exercises of godliness, yet taking faith to be only the owning of God and Christ, and a confident persuasion that all will be well with them, thus they make it so light a matter, and boldly arrogate that to themselves, which they think is so secret, out of the world's view, that none is able to disprove them. Here then they step behind the curtain, and plead what is in their hearts, so making account to hide all their evil beyond discovery; when, alas! they do still betray themselves in that course of their life, which is the main trial of their faith: and this is more to be known by the works than by the words. Let any say, as long and as oft as they will, that they do believe, this is no proof at all: for 'what does it profit, if a man say, 'that he has faith, and has not works; can 'faith save him?' James ii. 14. Such a faith (which is indeed but the image and shadow of faith) cannot save him, any more than a gilded paper-target can defend him. Let him

shew me his faith without his works, and that will put him very hard to it; for he may as soon shew me the sun without light, or the fire without heat. And if he do shew me a sun without light, I am sure it is but the picture of the sun; and if he do shew me a fire without heat, I am sure it is but a painted flame; and if he talk of faith in Christ, without doing the work of God, I am sure it is but talk. In this case, therefore, we are more to trust our eyes than our ears; rather to see how men live, than to hear what they say: for, let a man affirm over and over, that it is an excellent good fruit-tree, and yet I see it all withered and dead, and never to bear any thing worth the touching; I cannot then contradict my own sense and experience, to give him credit. And so let a man take never so much pains to make me believe, that he is a believer, and plead me down still, that he has the good faith, when I can never see what it is good for, nor find that he favours of holiness, nor follows after it, but rather disgusts and rejects it, and opposes and scorns it; does he think thus to dample and stun me, in vaunting of his strong faith in God, and his good belief in his Saviour? Against which phrases does he conclude none must reply, nor dare to question any such pretensions? Here I have not the faith to believe all such boasters of faith; nor am so to be clubbed into ever the better opinion of such, whose nakedness I can

too easily see through all these fig-leaves. If this be their faith, only to keep up a good conceit of themselves, and a strong presumption, that Christ will save them; nay, if this be the mighty atchievement of their faith, to get the mastery of conscience, and think to bore and rush into heaven in a way clean contrary to what the gospel of our Lord points out; such audacious hanging upon the Saviour of the world, to justify and bear them out, even in all the worst they can do, who can look upon it as the faith of our Lord? Yea, what better can it hear, than the proud swelling of an unhumbed heart, and the daring boldness of such wicked and worldly men, than whom there are not really greater infidels in the world? when they can venture upon all sin, because Christ has purchased pardon; and after they have trampled down their own conscience, together with his holy laws, put on the bold face, as if they had done nothing against him; when their believing gives the *supersedeas* to godly living, their confidence is the bar to their conversion, and their faith is the passport to carry them thro' all the foulest ways, as if they needed not care what they did, nor how they lived; when they have but once pinned themselves upon Christ, by that which they call their faith, but is indeed only a rude invasion, and vile profanation of the holy thing; such kind of believers may perish in their sins, for all this trusting in the Saviour

of sinners: and the Solifidian conceit will never do them any service, unless to aggravate their guilt and punishment, for so affronting the Lord that bought them, and perverting all the grace of God which brings salvation. This very faith shall be laid to their charge as their sin, and such a sin which gave heart and strength to all their other sins; and, instead of leading and keeping them to the Lord, emboldened them to fly from him, and to set his commands at defiance.

Indeed their challenging a part in the Saviour, when they lash out so extremely wide of the way of salvation, does but betray them to be false usurpers of that glorious privilege, in which they have no part or lot. And they do so commonly confute themselves, as to save the faith of Christ from bearing the blame of their miscarriage. Unless they could give a likelier account how they came by it, and made a better use of it, the suspicion is strong against them, that there is no such thing in them.

When as tempests use to shake the soul, ere Christ says, 'Peace, be still;' and when conviction and humiliation, preparing the soul for him, are such workings as all believers are well acquainted with, and from the greatest to the least, have a common sense of; what then, to their credit, can we think of their faith, who would be healed before wounded; at ease, before they have passed the strait gate;

children of God, before they have felt any pangs of the new birth; the Lord's freemen, before they have been under the spirit of bondage; saved by Christ Jesus, before they have found themselves lost without him?

Faith is compared to a building, Jude, ver. 20. And where we are to build high, we must lay the foundation low. But where there has been no deep humiliation, what is all the boasted faith, but a fond presumption? Such then are only full of themselves, and puffed up, like blisters or bladders, that were never pricked at heart, to let out the imposthume, and bring down the proud tumour. And it is then but a settling on their lees, instead of trusting in Christ; yea, and rather a strengthening themselves in their wickedness and worldly holds, than growing strong in the Lord: therefore they are so bold, because all flesh, and nothing of spirit in them to disturb them in their sins, but lurk in the rubbish of the old man, and fortify themselves in the natural fastness: and so they have need to look in the glass of the law, to see their sin and curse, before they look unto Jesus for relief and comfort. The repentance that breaks their hearts, and brings them to an unfeigned purpose of turning from their sins, must dispose them for the pardon, and the Saviour, which their faith is to receive.

And it is not to fancy forgiveness, and fancy happiness to ourselves, but to build on

the sure promises of the gospel of our Lord: for true faith is bred and fed by the word of God. And hast thou then this faith, when the holy word that should revive, and cheer, and transport thee, doth nothing but confound, and gall, and strike thee dead? Is that the faith of Christ, and not rather a fiction of thy own head, that never purges nor raises thy soul, nor quickens thee to thy work, nor engages thy heart to the Lord?

A faith that is the back and bolster to bear thee up, even in the worst that thou dost, to give thee heart's ease in thy sins, and make thee lye wallowing there, with a beastly pleasure.

Is it possible thou shouldst believe in the holy God, the holy Jesus, the holy Ghost, and yet be still a stranger and an enemy to holiness? Is it possible thou shouldest believe heaven to be the seat of holiness, into which nothing unclean shall enter; and yet love and chuse to continue filthy still? Thou art a sad believer, then, that believest nothing so much as the father of lies, and the absurdest dreams and contradictions.

Ah, Lord, how art thou provoked to thy face, by such as thou hast called to the knowledge of thy truth! when the Christian world so swarms with these locusts, buzzing every where, in our ears, with the noise of their faith, knowing that they are gone, as to any evidence for them from their life, yet they cry, they be-

lieve in Christ, and hope to be saved by their faith. And thus we have (if I may call over names so repugnant) swearing believers, and drunken believers, and whoring believers, and muck-worm believers, and knavish believers, and an endless gang of ungodly believers, who will all have it, that they believe; and still believe on till they have believed themselves out of their wits, and out of their souls; and believed themselves into the hands of the devil, and the damnation of hell. The Lord deliver us from such a senseless conceit, and wicked delusion, as the fine thing called their faith, which presumptuous sinners are so proud of.

But the right faith is a 'most holy faith,' Jude 20. And faith and holiness are so inseparably conjoined together, that whoever pretends to the one without the other, indeed has neither. And though faith does not make us free from all sin, yet it will give us such a tenderness, that we shall never be easy under it. It will make us impatient of the sinful uncleanness, and not suffer us to live and lye in the love and maintenance of any known wickedness. It is the 'shield to quench the fiery darts of the wicked,' so that we shall not usually fall by them; and whenever we do, we shall not lye by it, but be the sorest burden to ourselves, till we have got it off; and go with a mighty concern, to keep and cleanse those very hearts, where we know the eye of God pierces: for so the heart is said to

be 'purified by faith,' Acts xv. 19. It incorporates us with our Lord, as very parts of his body, endued with the same holy Spirit that is in himself; and so obliges us to conform to our Head, with whom we are thus vitally one, that the members of Christ may not act as the limbs of Satan. And though our holiness (even at best) can never justify, yet the faith that justifies, will ever make us holy. Yea, though faith alone justifies us, yet not that faith which is so alone, as to be severed from all other virtues and graces. No; but if this root of the matter be in us, it will shew its prolific efficacy and fertility, in all agreeable fruits produced by us. As the sun in the heavens enlightens, warms, and enlivens things on the earth; such effects will the faith of Christ work in the soul. It is the refiner's fire, and fuller's soap, to purge out our dross and corruptions. It is the spring and weight to set all the moveable parts a-going; and will not let us rest from seeking the Lord, till in him we find rest to our souls. It is a principle of life; for 'we live by the faith of the 'Son of God,' Gal. ii. 20. But a dead faith cannot give us life; and 'faith without works is dead,' James ii. 26. i. e. it is thus discerned to be dead; as the carcase, when there is no breath, sense, or motion in it, to shew any life.

So that I cannot give thee hopes to be justified by any faith, but what is justified by a

holy life. And still works must be the certificate to thy conscience, as well as to the world, that thy heart may not condemn thee, for pleading faith in Christ's merits, against obedience to Christ's commands: for there is a believing the Lord's commands, as well as his promises, Psal. cxix. 66. believing them to be not only needful and indispensable, but most equal and profitable; not only that thou must do them, but that it is absolutely best for thee so to do. And though thou hast nothing but Christ to trust to, yet thou hast a great deal more to do, besides trusting in Christ; a great deal more, which this trusting will put thee upon doing: for it is that principle of activity which will make thee busy, and shew the need that thou hast to be so; and also the blessed effects of it, that thy 'labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.' Thus the lively faith will shew itself in the actions of life, in the sense of sin; hunger and thirst after righteousness, and after the favour of God; and such a zeal for his religion and service, as will make thee brisk and busy, warm and affectionate, about the offices of piety; and make thee groan under thy remaining dulness, as thy clog and grief.

For this faith is accompanied with a renewed nature; and then from that holy actions will flow, even as water from the fountain: so that thou wilt reverence and love thy Lord, and heartily devote thyself to serve his inte-

rests, and carefully consult his honour, and dutifully regard his pleasure, and delight to approach his presence, and to be busied about his work. For 'unto them that believe, he is so precious,' 1 Pet. ii. 7. that they slight and leave all for him: and therefore their faith is said to be their 'victory over the world,' 1 John v. 4. for they will not set their hearts upon it, when they know so much better wherewith to be entertained. Worldlings therefore are unbelievers; and they do but talk of faith in Christ, that are still all upon it for this world. For faith is the evidence of the unseen world, shewing such great and glorious things above, as to cloud and disgrace all that is here below. It is the ferment, working upwards; and, as wings, carrying the soul away to converse in heaven. And the believer cannot find his heart sink, and grovel, and settle here, but he is soon sensible of the folly and mischief, and cries and struggles to be delivered and raised from the dust of the earth, and the mud of this world. O what believers then are they, that never so much as make confession or moan of their worldliness! but are rather in their element, when deepest so engaged, defend and plead for it, and shew an angry concern to be taken off, and no good-will to the holy exercises that have a tendency to the heavenly country.

And when faith and love of the saints are made twins, Col. i. 4. how can the believer

be a persecutor? and what part is he of the body, that can tear and worry any member? No man can 'hate his own flesh;' and no faithful soul can prey upon its own kind, nor be bitter against the generation of God's children. No; if thou love him that begat, thou wilt not malign any that are begotten of him; but to such thou wilt incline, and of such thou wilt be fond, above all persons else in the world. They will be dear to thee, for that holy image of thy Father, which is upon them.

And, in short, if thou art unholy, thou art unbelieving: for thou canst not believe the word of Christ, but thou must be sure, that allowed sin will run thee upon the damnation of hell: and therefore, where thou canst not be innocent, yet thou wilt be penitent; and though thou canst not plead, Not guilty, yet thou wilt not be a worker of iniquity, but still aspire and strive to be more holy, as one that believes there is no other way to the heavenly glory.

Wouldst thou then give a good answer to such as ask thee 'a reason of the faith and hope' that thou hast in thy Saviour? thou must give thy consent to be ruled, as well as saved, by him; and make appear how much indeed thou canst trust him, by venturing thy soul, and all thy eternal concerns, in the way that he bids thee take; never misdoubting the course he puts thee upon, nor fancying any other to be better, nor separating faith from holiness, lest

thou separate thy soul from heaven, nor thinking to believe thyself into it, when thou dost not, by 'patient continuance in well doing, 'seek for it;' for so mayst thou perish in thy sins, for all thy reliance on thy Saviour, when it is on other terms than he has laid down; and thou seemest confident of thy salvation, in the very way of damnation.

But though thou must trust in him, so as to exclude every thing else for a Saviour, yet not so as to exclude thy diligence to work out thy salvation. And though thou must not set any inherent holiness in Christ's stead, to trust to it; yet must thou never throw it so low, as to vilify and grow careless of it, nor be a despiser of good works; however thou art not to depend upon them as the saviours of thy soul, thou must notwithstanding have them to shew for thy interest in the Saviour, to shew, that thou art 'founded upon the rock,' Matth. vii. 25. and that thou hast 'laid up the good foundation against the time to come,' 1 Tim. vi. 19. i. e. to shew, that thou art one of those to whom the promise of eternal life is made, one that by the grace of God art brought in the way to it, and standest fair and sure for it.

To sum up then what has been said: As the Son of God came not into the world, to make him friends with sin and wickedness, but to plant the faith that should be fruitful in works of righteousness and holiness; so, where-ever there is true holiness, it springs from faith;

and if it be true faith, it will also bring forth holiness of life. And then for such as abandon themselves over to ungodly courses, no matter indeed whether they believe one way or another; for it is not any believing will be their security, who persist in wicked living.

It were well then, if our accusers were no more against the imputed, than we are against the inherent righteousness. O may we 'put 'them to silence,' in the Apostle's proposed way, 1 Pet. ii. 15. not by professing fairer, or talking faster, but by doing better. Though the scripture is express, that 'God justifies 'the ungodly,' Rom. iv. 5. (for that he justifies none but the godly, I never read in his word;) yet our doctrine does not embolden any ungodly man so to continue. No; it is so far from defending him in his impiety, that it cuts off all his hopes, if he depart not from iniquity.

For 'men, indeed, to justify the wicked,' If. v. 23. is to patronize and hearten them on in their evil ways. But when God justifies the ungodly, a change always follows to righteousness and true holiness. And it must be sincere righteousness fulfilled by us, that will give us encouragement to plead Christ's perfect righteousness fulfilled in us. As by faith we must have recourse to him, and rely upon him, if we would have his righteousness to be our own; so must we follow him in the righteous ways he has tracked us out, if we would

have the comfortable evidence, that we are righteous through his righteousness.

And if still the clamour go on, that we gratify the lazy, who are glad to slip the yoke, and throw off their duty; for if all be done for them, why may not they sit still, and take their ease? and how can we press them to any good works, when we teach, that they are all insufficient to their justification?

Let me ask such questioners, Is there no preaching up the necessity of good works, unless we prove them to be the sinner's plea for justification in the sight of God? And if they be any who belong to this church, will they not hear the church? (Serm. of Salv.) "We shut not out other good works, to be joined with faith; but we shut them out from the office of justifying: so that, though they be all present together in him that is justified, yet they justify not all together."

And may not we disclaim their merit, and at the same time keep up their practice? Nay, what if, after all the cry, we better secure them, than they that build their justification upon them? For holding justification and sanctification to be inseparable, we do never renounce, but still suppose them, and still make them the consequents, though never the forerunners of faith and grace. Though we are not for exalting them above their due place, yet we would not shut them out of doors. Tho' we cannot pride it in the polluted stuff, yet

we would not go naked. Though we dare not give them the honour of working our justification, yet we constantly affirm, that they flow from it, even as light from the sun: and though sometimes they are weak and clouded, as the sun-light is, and do not perpetually shine forth with a meridian lustre; yet there is the principle and fountain of them; and the seed of God, laid in the believing soul, to raise and maintain them: yea, even in a cloudy sky, we can tell, that the sun is risen; and it cannot be up, but there will be some signs of day: so no justification in God's sight, but there will be some holy change in our sight; as eyes opened, heart softened, prejudices conquered, affections raised, course turned, and the whole man bettered, not to be less careful of his duty, but more concerned than ever for it, seeing the grace of the gospel takes not away the obligation of the law, nor does justification give leave to commit any sin, though it give pardon for all sins committed. And it was a good saying of a great reformer, *Libertas in Christo nullam innocentiae fecit injuriam*. "Our liberty in Christ does not diminish any thing of our duty to him." For still 'the tree is to be known by its fruits;' and they are not his sheep that do not follow him. The freedom which he brings is from the bondage of sin, and the dread of wrath, that we may more readily and ingenuously serve him, as a people delivered and made

willing by him. And such a relaxation is the strongest obligation, Psal. cxxx. 4. 'There is forgiveness with thee, O Lord, that thou mayest be feared;' even with such a child-like fear of offending, as is not only consistent with the dearest love, but naturally flows from it. And thus even believers 'pass the time of their sojourning here in fear,' 1 Pet. i. 17. 'looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God,' Heb. xii. 15. And the more cautiously shall all, by such, be carried, the more they perceive how they have been favoured.

To be looked upon in our blood, and even when we were 'enemies, to be reconciled unto God by the death of his Son,' Rom. v. 16. O what like the sense of this mighty undeserved love, to melt down and overcome the heart, and beget a dear love to him, that so first loved us! And then what so studious as love to be thankful? and to express the thankfulness in all pleasingness, striving and loving to be like our generous lover, and blessed provider? This is the ingenuity of God's children, to be won for ever with such kindness; and then take heart, because they are in such hands, and never think they can do enough for the God so unspeakably good. The sense of his love fills their hearts with joy; and then that 'joy of the Lord is their strength.' Nothing in the world so animates and heartens them on in the way of their duty.

And though strangers to the life of love would sin for ever, if they durst for the fear of hell; and could ungodly wretches be but sure of pardon, alas! what would they do for the love of God, but be unfatiable in the foulest wickedness, were all the barricadoes of a servile dread but removed out of their way? yet faithful souls fly from sin for the love of their dear Lord; and ask with a holy indignation, as Rom. vi. 1. 'Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?' Shall believers make no conscience of obedience to God's commands, because their obedience cannot justify them in God's sight? Or shall they grow upon the God of all grace, and venture to do their worst, because all is made sure on their side? The Apostle argues rather from their sure oblation to their more cautious conversation, Eph. iv. 30. 'Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed to the day of redemption.' And he 'beseeches them only by the mercies of God,' to devote themselves to his service, Rom. xii. 1. for indeed how could he ever devise a more forcible argument? Exhorting to a holy walking with God, he does not eat his former words, nor undo the doctrine he had taught of justification by 'faith without works,' as a loose and dangerous doctrine. No; he argues indeed from more sweet, but never the less cogent topics; such as, the dissingenuity, the ingratitude, the provocation, to sin against light and power, and all the most

gracious engagements to do better; the painfulness and madness so to grate upon the soul, and wound the conscience, and create a hell in it. And they are novices in the business of regeneration, that do not know it produces the new creature: and what a contradiction it is then to his very constitution, to lye wallowing in sin, when he is shaped and made for quite another service; how he reluctates against the wicked thing; and while he is himself, he cannot do it.

I appeal to every heart that has been warmed with the love of God, if there be in the world a more powerful dissuasive from sin, than the loving-kindness of the Lord in forgiving our sins; if there be any cords stronger than those of love to bind us to our duty; and if any force more prevalent than that, 2 Cor. v. 14. when 'the love of Christ constraineth us.' No; the child of God would set himself against sin, though there were no heaven or hell: for God makes it irksome, and holiness delightful, to the justified soul. He that lives in the region of love, and sees the love of Christ blotting out all the bitter things which the law writes against him, is more animated, as well as more obliged, to live to the reliever of his misery: and faith does more to conquer his corruptions, than all the most elaborate of legal duties ever could do: it wings and enspirits his services, to know in whom he believes, and with whom he has to

do; the sweet Saviour, the tender Father, that exacts not our failings, but compassionates our infirmities; and expects not perfection of obedience from us, but approbation of that holy law, which we can no better fulfil, and an earnest desire and endeavour still to proceed further, and do better: and then he cheerfully enters the yoke of Christ, as that of wedlock, and draws in it, not as compelled to it, but in love with it.

Now, how uneasy soever it is to move for dread of the lash, yet what more delightful than to obey him, that so spares us, that has abounded with such riches of grace towards us, and that is still surprising us with loving-kindness afresh? Though faith is a riddle to the natural man, and holiness but a correction-house to the un sanctified sinner, the believer is swayed with the power of the one, and ravished with the sweetness of the other. And he that has known the sorrow of his old distemper, will be proud of the cure which grace has wrought, and ever wary to preserve the health recovered. And if Gentiles, in the state of nature, much more the regenerate, in the state of grace, are 'a law to themselves.' Their own new nature, and the divine image drawn upon them, is a standing rule to them. And they that have the internal relish of heavenly sweets, and the very life of God derived to them, will be infinitely choice and tender thereof, and shrink back, with the utmost an-

tipathy, from all that assaults and spoils the portraiture of God, and the antepast of glory in the soul. And even when they are safe in the hands of their Saviour, yet they will tremble at the sins that drew his blood.

Thus the doctrine of free grace, and justification by faith, (that soft pillow under the weary disconsolate soul,) which, like other sweet and good things, is liable to such foul abuses, yet works in all regenerated persons to holy purposes. And the same grace that justifies them, also preserves them from that diabolical sophistry, to argue from divine mercy to carnal liberty. Thus saith our church, Art 17. "The godly consideration of predestination, and our election in Christ, as it is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, so does it fervently kindle their love towards God." And however forward are some to damn believers to hell, for the very persuasion and confidence, upon which, themselves do know, is built all their love of God, and living to him; I can never admire any of those fruits, that are not of the gospel-plantation, and that have not Christ 'dwelling by faith in the heart,' for the root that bears them.

All that know 'the grace of God in truth,' cannot but know, what a holy thing it is, and how it operates in the soul to all the best effects; yea, what a satisfaction and pleasure it gives in well-doing, as the discovery of our

unfeigned believing; and so makes the good works more refreshing to ourselves, than ever they can be to the bowels of any others, that fare the better for us. Nay, even godly sorrow, which works the repentance without which we shall perish, flows from this same fountain of faith. And there cannot be the true evangelical repentance, which the believing of God's goodness, and love in Christ Jesus, does not lead us to. So teaches our church, (Serm. of Rep.) "A part of repentance is faith, where-
" by we do apprehend and take hold on the pro-
" mises of God, touching the free pardon and
" forgiveness of our sins; which promises are
" sealed up to us, with the death and blood-
" shedding of his Son Jesus Christ; and they
" that teach repentance without faith in Christ,
" and a persuasion, that God, for his sake, will
" forgive us all our sins, teach but the repent-
" ance of Cain and Judas."

Where is the wrong then done to holiness and good life by this doctrine of faith, but that it gives a better security to the believers piety and integrity, to preserve them from apostasy, and to 'keep them by the power of
' God, through faith, to salvation?' and also that it makes all that is holy, just, and good in them, more voluntary and filial, and better becoming the Lord's freemen, and the dear children of our heavenly Father?

Therefore, though we would never take off from the necessity of personal righteousness,

nor offer to relax the obligation to holy conversation; yet we would have a root to bear the fruits; for else we know there can be none, but painted or rotten fruits, which, however they may please a moral heathen, yet will they not please a holy God, who is pleased only in his beloved Son, and pleased with none but such as are in him. We would not then have faith banished, lest all the good so much contended for, should go off with it: for what good fruits, without an implantation in Christ Jesus; if we will hearken to him, John xv. 4. 'As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me.' Can persons have lawful children before they are married? And what high thoughts can we conceive of their piety, who make but a jest of this spiritual matrimony, and such an union with the heavenly Bridegroom? Sure the works truly good, and a life right godly, are not such a bastard-brood, but a more legitimate offspring.

It is not to say, then, if I were completely holy, then I would make bold to believe, but thou must believe, that thou mayest get matters amended, and be made holier and better, and first be grafted into thy Saviour, that thou mayest bear the fruits, to glorify thy heavenly Father. And such as go another way to work, they are 'ignorant of God's righteousness,' and the 'way of peace they have not known.' Let holy life then be ever

owned as the consequent of holy faith, and
 ‘let every one that nameth the name of Christ
 ‘depart from iniquity.’ But let them know
 withal, that by his grace it is to be done; and
 acknowledge with our Apostle, Gal. ii. 20. ‘I
 ‘live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and
 ‘the life which I now live, is by the faith of
 ‘the Son of God, who loved me, and gave
 ‘himself for me:’ for he is our life, and the
 eternal fountain of all holiness: so that ‘if
 ‘any man be in him, he is a new creature,’
 2 Cor. v. 17. otherwise he is but a vain pre-
 tender.

Thus I have shewed an absolute necessity
 of the righteousness inherent, that righteouf-
 ness which is called our own. But yet, after
 all, there is no necessity of trusting in it, or
 building all our salvation upon it. Take heed
 of ‘going about so to establish it.’ But,

3. Submit to the righteousness of God, as
 ever you would enjoy peace with God.

This advice now is to such as labour in the
 works of righteousness, and give themselves
 daily to the practice of holy duties, and are
 ‘followers of God as dear children,’ in the
 ways of a serious religion, both diligently
 ‘keeping their hearts,’ and conscientiously
 ‘ordering their conversation.’ The relief and
 comfort here to be administered, such as these
 do need, and to such it does belong. And ‘wo
 ‘to us, if we preach not the gospel,’ this truly
 gospel-message, and glad-tidings, to them;

that Christ the Lord will espouse their cause, and give them rest, and take their faults upon himself, and make them 'the righteousness of God in him.' This is the very marrow of the gospel, which makes all the redeemed of the Lord heartily to bless God, for the redemption of the world by his Son Jesus Christ, and praise and magnify him for ever.

And notwithstanding this faith in Christ, and his righteousness imputed, has been fiercely assaulted by all the forces that Satan and his instruments, the sons of pride, could muster up against it, and never (it may be) with more bitterness than of late: yet, if we are wise for our souls, we will sooner part with our lives, and all that is dearest to us in the world, than ever let it go: when as all the world cannot save them that receive not the only Saviour of the world, offered to them: and how is he received, but by faith? John i. 12. 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.' We are 'made the righteousness of God in him,' even as he was 'made sin for us,' 2 Cor. v. 21. And how was that but by imputation? 'What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh,' (or unable to justify us, through the obstacle on our side,) it is fulfilled in us, by the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, whereof we are to give testimony, by our walking, 'not after the flesh, but after the

‘Spirit,’ Rom. viii. 3, 4. though it is not in our services, but in our Saviour, that we are complete; and we shall be sentenced by the sincerity of our hearts, and not by the perfection of our works, when found in him, who will answer for the imperfection of all his.

But, after all the bragging of works, alas! what are all the best works good for before justification? if our church shall be heard, Art. 13. “Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not acceptable and pleasant to God; for as much as they spring not from faith in Christ, but have even the nature of sin.” O! how can dead men do the works of the living? and who expects to ‘gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?’ It is after faith, that men are in more care, and in better capacity, to live godly. Christ’s faithful people are made a willing people, by his law written in their hearts. And to mollify the heart of stone; to make the slave of Satan a member of Christ; to turn dung-hills into beds of spices; heaps of rubbish into temples of the holy Ghost; wolves into sheep; and persecutors into preachers of the faith: all this is the mighty work of God, in the renovation of a sinner. And to the faithful it is ‘given of him, to believe in the name of his Son,’ Phil. i. 29. But before men can go, they must have life and legs. And till quickened together with Christ, and ‘created in him to good works,’ it is but blowing at a dead

coal, and a vain struggle, to think of doing all ourselves, when, alas! 'without him we can do nothing.' Even the godliest men are so humbled and broken in the sense of their defects, that upon this account they are the greatest burden to themselves; yea, so loath themselves for their sins, that they are for getting as far as they can out of themselves, and for setting up under the shadow of the Lord their righteousness, where they shall be no more bold than welcome; for he that redeemed them, will kindly receive them. He bids them come to him, and promises, that so coming, he 'will not cast them from him,' Matth. xi. 28. and John vi. 37. And this now is the 'way of peace,' the only way of true peace, Rom. v. 1. 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Here is the childrens meat, belonging to all the household of faith. And such must not be hindered of their portion in due season, because the dogs will be snatching at it. The flower is not therefore to be grubbed and suppressed for shewing its head, because some spiders may suck poison out of it. And must we bury some of the word of God in silence, because ill men may wrest it to their ruin? 'Must their lies make men hold their peace?' as Zophar asked, Job xi. 3. must we not 'declare the whole counsel of God,' if any part of it be in danger to be misunderstood? No; the sun, that tans, and blackens, and hardens

some things, is needful to illuminate, warm, mollify, beautify, sweeten, meliorate, and perfect others. And such various effects has the opening of the 'Sun of righteousness,' according to the different condition of the recipients. But what some make mischievous to themselves, yet it cannot, without wrong and damage, be withheld from others: let those make never so bad use of it, these can never do well without it.

The free grace of God in Christ Jesus is the only ark for a tossed soul to rest in. But to seek rest in our own performances, is like a man's struggling in waves, to keep on the water-top, which by art or might, for a little while, peradventure, he may do; but needs must he sink, when he has spent all his strength; and cannot lye long on the surface, without a support, or some vessel to carry him away to the desired haven. To rely on him that has satisfied the law, which condemns us, and bore the curse, which else must have fallen upon us; this may, indeed, relieve and ease us. But no rest for sinners any where out of Christ to be found, either in themselves, or in all the world. Only his merits and satisfaction, which content the justice of heaven for our sins, can pacify conscience, and settle our disquieted souls. And the soul that embarks not in this bottom, will still be fluctuating, and find nothing but sad frustration. Till we come to take up here, O where shall

we find any place to lay our heads, or fix our feet? To riddle our own garden, for the fruit that grows no where but in paradise; to think of living out of Christ, on the stock of our own sufficiency; to bring that to the Lord, which we should fetch from him; to bear the burden, which we should cast upon him, and go forth in our own strength, when we should lean on the Lord our 'strength and our Redeemer:' all these are baffling attempts, which will leave us to lye down in darkness and sorrow. When we know ourselves to be worthy of all hatred, O, how can we ever be satisfied, till we believe ourselves 'accepted in the Beloved?' What else can drive from our conscience, the dread which drives us from our God? When we go conscious, that he sees and loaths our filthiness, and no work we can do, but is stained with the corruption in us; or, do we never so well at present, yet the remembrance of former sins recoiling upon us, will spoil, not only all the merit of it, but all the hope built upon it. Here, to cover our nakedness with fig-leaves, rather betrays our folly, than hides our shame. For the rags of depraved nature, however fringed and coloured with all artificial accomplishments, and moral performances, they can never give boldness and assurance to any that know themselves, till they are found in Christ Jesus, the true King of righteousness, and King of peace, the great plenipotentiary

of heaven, sent not only to treat with us, but, by his merits, to effect the blessed peace for us.

O which of all the moralists can direct a conscious sinner to peace with the just and holy God! who can cry to him, 'Abba, Father,' till they have some sense of their adoption in the Son of his love? Still we shall be diffident of audience and acceptance, if we go in any other name or recommendation: we shall go to him, then, not as children to their father, but as malefactors to their judge and avenger. And nothing but our trust in the mercies of our God, through the merits of our Saviour, can send us (as the heirs of glory) with 'boldness to the throne of grace.' Without this no awakened conscience was ever well settled, no faithful soul built up and established. If we gather our future bliss only from our present works, no wonder that our hope is still ready to give up the ghost. So little of heaven is to be seen in such muddy waters. And if none but the worthy should be saved, ah, Lord! who then should be saved?

Though 'love is the fulfilling of the law;' true, yet when that law obliges us to 'love the Lord our God, with all our hearts, and mind, and soul, and might,' and we cannot but be conscious how defective and short herein we have been, and still are; it will rather terrify than justify us, and give us more smart than comfort; and, instead of building us up

in the faith, it will demolish and batter down our hopes. For O what comfortable expectation can we build upon that holy, perfect law of God, which only discovers our nakedness, and upbraids our imperfection, when we carry in us still so much matter of our own indictment and condemnation! And ‘who can say, ‘I have made my heart clean? I am pure from ‘my sin?’ Prov. xx. 9. even the saying it would but add to the sin. Yea, when the very fairest of our works, that look most likely to justify us, yet need to be pardoned themselves; and nothing that we can do, but still tells us, how much we want the Saviour to help us out. When we hear then the promises of God to reward good works, O what works of ours can we ever think worthy of reward, if his own mercy in Christ do not first cover that in them which makes them worthy of punishment?

The consciousness of our integrity (we know) is called the brazen wall, to set us safe, and to make us undaunted: and, indeed, great is the security and the confidence arising from sincerity and uprightness, as it is an indication and seal of our faith unfeigned, and of our real interest in the holy Saviour. But will it not argue rather a forehead, than a wall of brass, to think of immuring and fortifying ourselves so in our own righteousness and goodness, that the Redeemer shall seem of small use or significance to us, and the dependence

on his merits, fit only for some else that are not so well provided?

In good truth, even the best of men have the poorest thoughts of their own performances, and the least expectation from them. The greater progress they make, the more defects still they espy, and come to know themselves better, than to trust in any the best of their own doings: as was well observed by Cardinal Contarenus; though an adversary, yet his testimony has not the less, but the more validity, as coming from one of the company of merit-mongers. *Experimento videmus*, (saith he,) *viros sanctos, qui quanto magis sanctitate proficiunt, &c.* “We see, by experience, that
“ holy men, the more sanctified they grow,
“ and the further they proceed in holy ways,
“ they have still the meaner opinion of themselves, and find the more need of a Saviour,
“ and of his righteousness imputed; and so
“ give up themselves to rely on Christ alone.
“ Now, this is not, because growing holier,
“ they see less than they did before, or become
“ more vile and abject than they were; for
“ the more holy they are, the more quick-
“ sighted also, and the more noble-spirited:
“ but as they grow more searching, the more
“ do they apprehend the slenderness of their
“ own inherent righteousness, and discern the
“ more spots to offend their enlightened eyes,
“ and find that there is no leaning to their
“ own virtue and goodness, but that they must

“ of necessity betake themselves unto Christ
 “ Jesus, and rest upon his grace and merits
 “ imputed to them.”

Thus the purest in heart use to be the poorest in spirit. And as the spirit of the humble and of the contrite ones most needs to be revived, so the blood of Christ eases the oppressed mind, when nothing else in the world can. Faith sends us to our Lord Jesus; and the belief of his Deity and all-sufficiency gives us the surest hope, and the sweetest consolation. For no doubt then of a full atonement and propitiation made for our sins, when he was no less than God that made it.

To think of God's holiness, and our own sinfulness, that is enough to strike down even the exactest liver, if he have nothing without himself for his support. But the curse of the law, to believers on Jesus, is a hand-writing taken out of the way, a bond cancelled, and nailed to the cross of Christ: for what he did as a surety, Heb. vii. 22. to blot out the *chirographum*, that obligation which was against them, Col. ii. 14. that they are interpreted to have done themselves, as debtors, seeing debtor and surety are, in the sense of the law, but one and the same person. And considering him as the head, and ourselves as his members, it will not only appear more plain to our understanding, but come home more close to our consolation, that God dealt with him as a sinner, for our sins taken upon him, and deals

with us as righteous, for his righteousness made over to us. And thus only do we come to be on even-board with heaven, and to 'joy
' in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by
' whom we have received the atonement,'
Rom. v. 11. seeing he has so 'loved us,' as
to 'wash us from our sins, even in his own
' blood,' Rev. i. 5.

And this faith in Christ, and depending only upon his satisfaction for our salvation, some that scorn it as their meal by day, may yet be glad to come to it as their supper at night. The death-bed may bring them to Bellarmine's *Tutissimum est*.—"It is the safest
" course to trust only to God's mercy,' which must be through the blessed Mediator, because out of him God does not extend saving mercy to any miserable sinner. Such another song at that time may they sing, than they were wont to be heard in. And the worst that I wish them is, that they 'may find mercy from
' the Lord in that day;' even for his sake, whom now they seem to apprehend so little need of. But, at present, I cannot think they are in any good way for it. And O how just were it with God, at last to bar up that refuge against them, out of which they now so studiously shut themselves, and then to despise their souls, as they now cast their contempt upon his Son, and strive to tear up the very foundation of all Christian hope and consolation, even that faith in the blessed Jesus, and

that steadfast reliance on his merits and righteousness, which alone will give relief and comfortable expectation in our closest approximations to the holy God, in our surprisals with the most startling events, in the depth of our sorest pressures, and in our most serious preparations for the dying hour, and the eternal world to come?

But blessed be the 'God of hope, that fills us with joy and peace in believing,' Rom. xv. 13. that very believing which they make the subject of their mocking. And when every refuge else shall fail, and nothing besides, in ourselves or in all the world, will be found fit to place confidence in, this will be a retreat, whither the faithful may fly, and where they may be safe. Though men revile, and, like the unconverted Saul, Acts xxii. 9. 'beat those that believe on the name of Jesus;' though Satan accuse, and conscience recoil, and the law condemn; yet rooted and built up in Christ Jesus the Lord, Christian, thou shalt be 'stablished in the faith, abounding therein with thanksgiving,' Col. ii. 7. For though thou hast sinned, thy Redeemer hast satisfied; and God has promised, that 'whoever believeth on him, shall receive remission of sins,' Acts x. 43. Therefore, saith the Apostle, Gal. ii. 16. 'Even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ.' And when it is God that justifieth, who is he that con-

demneth? Rom. viii. 33, 34. If men do, no matter; for thou art not to stand or fall at their sentence. And if the Lord bless though they curse, it shall do thee no hurt, nor deprive thee in the least of his blessing; but, being forgiven, and justified, then thou art blessed, and mayest not only be at rest, and well satisfied, but having 'access by faith into 'this grace wherein thou standest, mayest rejoice in hope of the glory of God,' Rom. v. 2. And 'if thou wilt believe, thou shalt 'see the glory of God,' John xi. 40. 'In 'quietness and confidence then shall be thy 'strength,' Is. xxx. 15. This faith will make thee more 'strong in the Lord, and bold in 'thy God,' than all the forces thou canst ever raise from thy own works: for if thou build there, alas! it is but upon the sands and the floods, and still thou wilt be a stranger to peace and rest. After thou hast done all that ever thou canst, yet wilt thou find so much fault and imperfection in it, that, like many others, who do best, thou wilt be most unsatisfied with thy own doings: so that I cannot think the 'quietness and assurance for ever,' Is. xxxii. 17. is so much the effect of our own righteousness, as of the 'righteousness of God: for 'we who have believed, do enter into rest,' Heb. iv. 3. And 'after ye believed in Christ, 'ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise,' Eph. i. 13. But they that still insist on the justification by works, are never like to

taste the sweetness of grace: for the rest and rejoicing comes of faith and believing: and this is the joy and solace of faith, that our Lord Jesus is the Son and heir of heaven, and that we in him are the children and heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ: for upon what does all our salvation depend, but upon the promised mercy of God in Christ Jesus? and what receives and embraces the promise, but our faith? To love God, indeed, that fits us up to live with God. But O how can we love a judging, punishing God, that is against us, till we believe, that he is reconciled to us, and upon terms of peace with us? for we 'love him, because he first loved us, and have 'known and believed the love that God has 'to us,' 1 John iv. 16.

And though some, in their writings of faith, suppress and stifle (or only jeer and disgrace) the trusting part of faith, I wonder that any conscious sinners dare do so: and I much more wonder, that any ministers or members of the church of England should ever offer to do it, when the church makes this trusting so essential to faith, and even the whole description of it. (Hom. of the Pass.) faith is called "a sure
"trust and confidence in the mercies of God,
"whereby we persuade ourselves," (not only that Christ died, to put us in a capacity of pardon, which is all that some will please to allow, but) "that God both hath, and will for-
"give our sins; that he hath accepted us a-

“gain to his favour, released us from the
“bonds of damnation, and received us again
“into the number of his elect people, not
“for our merits or deserts, but only and sole-
“ly for the merits of Christ’s death and pas-
“sion.”——And “this faith is the only in-
“strument of salvation now left unto us;—
“even stedfastly to behold Christ crucified
“with the eyes of our heart, and only trust
“to be saved by his death and passion, and to
“have our sins clean washed away through
“his most precious blood.” (And first part
of Serm. of Faith :) “Faith is not only the
“common belief of the articles of our faith,
“but it is also a true trust and confidence of
“the mercies of God, through our Lord Jesus
“Christ, and a stedfast hope of all good things
“to be received at God’s hands.” And in-
stead of cautioning us against such doctrine, the
Homily of Salvat. reciting the words of St Am-
brose, “They who believe in Christ are saved
“without works, and by faith only, freely re-
“ceive remission of their sins,” thus descants
upon them: “Consider diligently these words,
“without works, by faith only, freely we re-
“ceive the remission of our sins. What can
“be spoken more plainly, than to say, that
“freely without works, by faith only, we re-
“ceive remission of our sins?” (And then
ends thus:) “Faith says to us, Unto Christ
“only I send you, to take away your sins,
“forsaking therein all your good virtues,

“ words, thoughts, and works, and only putting your trust in Christ.” (This is very plain speaking; yet saith the next Hom.) “ All will not serve with the contentious, but they will forge matters of contention, when they have no occasion for it.” Which was a prediction, that some, in these days, are very officious to verify upon themselves.

But when our articles of religion do call this godly and wholesome doctrine; and some of our fathers and sons of the church now gird at it, and thunder against it, as pernicious, if not damnable doctrine, shall we hear the church, or these new doctors? If we must hear them, why then are not the articles and homilies publicly condemned? Nay, why are they still recommended to be read in churches, and made the very test of a son of this church, yea, imposed as the terms of coming into its ministry? How does this consist with what we so often hear from pulpits, and see from the press, such contrary notions, and confident assertions, concerning faith and justification, as if the authors of them were sworn enemies both to articles and homilies?

I know how coarsely the former have been treated by some of late, from whom one might have expected better words. Though they have chose to swallow what they find themselves unable to digest, yet they might forbear to reproach their church and their own act both together. But now it may be counted a fa-

vour only to expound the articles, when so many cannot forbear to expose them. Indeed the late exposition, that seems to be rather a history, than decision of the controversy, yet gives the beam a gentle turn, so much past *aequilibrium*, that one, who never had the honour of the great author's private conversation, may, notwithstanding, thereby attain to a pretty good understanding of his own opinion.

However the variety of senses which he gives is entertaining, the *acumen* and dexterity of management very taking, and the pacific healing design commendable and praiseworthy; (for, where we cannot all think alike, there must be some bearing and forbearing one another :) but yet contradictions will never be reconciled, and doctrines derogating from God's free grace, and Christ's full merit, (by such as have experienced the one, and confide in the other,) cannot well be digested or endured.

We have long had a good honest exposition, that has done the articles justice, in shewing their fair agreement with the holy scriptures. And indeed they do so far explain themselves, in their own evidence of expression, that every true believer (though no scholar) is ready to be a subscriber. And others, of the old leaven, cannot but see so much naked truth in them, as gives them a prejudice against them beyond any possibility of reconciliation, how-

ever any may seek to hide that truth, by wrapping it up in the clouds of a polemic dissertation. And when they seem to praise the moderation and wisdom to be observed in our present articles, and make a flourish, as if they had them on their side, or could expound them to their own cue; they might be much better pleased with a new set, or, at least, be very willing to abate half a dozen of the thirty-nine; those, in particular, that exalt the grace of God so high, and humble the pride of man lower than they have a mind to be thrown. Now, here, some that glory in their sonship, might do well to shew so much dutifulness to their mother, that many who dissent from the discipline, may not be known (not to say spighted) for being a great deal more orthodox in the doctrine of this church. But how uneasy soever any sons of the church are to be so tied up, I cannot think the time is come, when there should be a necessity of coining a new sense of the old articles, or that any alteration of our affairs should call for a change in the doctrine of our church, i. e. (as I have all along understood it) the doctrine of the gospel. I do sincerely join in the church's prayer, (on St Paul's conversion,) that "God, " who, through the preaching of the blessed " Apostle, St Paul, has caused the light of " the gospel to shine throughout the world, " would grant, that we, having his wonderful conversion in remembrance, may shew

“forth our thankfulness to him for the same,
 “by following the holy doctrine which he
 “taught.”

But if they quarrel with some obsolete words, or immodish expressions in homilies, must the doctrine also suffer for those? They may be amended, (*si placeat;*) but I wish that the teachers of a novel faith would let the doctrine alone, lest it fare never the better for such daring innovators, who (in my opinion) should rather have kept out of the church, than come into it, to make so bold with their own subscriptions, as well as her determinations, when they can set up the loud outcries of no less than ruin to the church, from such as they think are not exact enough in the lesser matters, which the author of EIK. BAZ. (to the Pr.) calls “the skirts and suburbs of “religion;” and yet themselves never stick so desperately to strike at the very substance and vitals.

But whatever a great man says against faith’s “justifying only as it apprehends the merits “and righteousness of Jesus Christ,” I dare admit this principle, even in the engagement with an Antinomian champion, depending on a good cause, and the authority of a sound church, without presuming on my great luck, or the adversary’s little cunning. The book, out of which I quote this, and some books of the like argument, wherewith I am well pleased in the main, I should admire as excellent

throughout, if they had but another turn given them, as to the matters of faith taught by ours, and by all the reformed churches.

And whatever you may read in some books, or hear in some sermons, to the contrary, be so 'rooted, then, and established in the faith,' Eph. ii. 7. that no cavils or scoffs of the adversary may ever shake or shame you out of it. O 'strive together for the faith of the gospel! in nothing terrified by your adversaries,' Phil. i. 27, 28. let them talk never so confidently or reproachfully; but learn resolution here of our Apostle, 2 Tim. i. 12. 'I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded, that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, against that day;' even myself, and the whole of my salvation, I have put into his blessed hands; and I doubt not of his sufficiency for my good security. I set my heart at rest, not because I have gone through such offices, or done such works, but because my Redeemer liveth, who is able to save me, and invites me to come to him, that I may be saved by him.

Thus, Christians, by the hand of faith, take and apply the Lord Jesus, with all his saving benefits to yourselves, to rely on him for salvation; and lay all the stress of your eternal bliss on him alone; so, as if he fail you, ye are for ever lost; and so to trust your whole salvation on the meritorious ransom of your Sa-

viour, as to have no other shift or reserve in the world; to reckon upon no other way of help and relief, if this will not do; to despair of yourselves, and of all other creatures, for the obtaining everlasting salvation; and to put all that ever belongs to your final welfare into the sole custody of Christ Jesus; and to confide in the help that is laid upon him, the almighty Redeemer, and in no other: this is to take and apply him to yourselves, and rely upon him alone, without any to go partakers with him, or any other refuge to turn in at, should he disappoint you; 'looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, to eternal life,' Jude 21.

And thus poor helpless creatures must do, and not dream of a self-sufficiency, to be like the Most High, whose prerogative is to depend upon none out of himself, but be glad to seek further, and take sanctuary elsewhere; to stay upon the 'holy One of Israel,' and put themselves into the hands of Jesus Christ, that almighty helper, with whom alone they may be safe, and there set their hearts at rest: for our need and impotent state do throw us upon other security and resorts abroad, than what we find at home in ourselves fit to be relied on. And if David said he 'had fainted, unless he had believed,' we need not be ashamed of that prop to our weakness; but may rather 'rejoice in Christ Jesus,' and bless 'the God of our salvation,' for that most com-

portable retreat; and there solace ourselves, as Psal. cxvi. 7. 'Return unto thy rest, O my soul! for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.'

And this now is no intoxicating opiate to stupify conscience, but a divine recipe, most needful to settle the soul. It is building upon that rock, Rom. ix. 33. 'on whom whosoever believeth, shall not be ashamed.' Though ungodly sinners, by their blind presumption, dash themselves against this rock, and so he proves also for the fall of many; yet true believers can never be established on any other foot. And therefore others profanation of the sanctuary must not drive them from it, when it is not possible for them to live, and be well, without it; for Christ is both 'our life, and our peace,' Col. iii. 4. and Eph. ii. 14. Without this quickening Spirit, we are 'dead in our sins;' and, without his propitiating merit, we are dead in law, and condemned at the tribunal of God.

O! here is the 'blood that speaks better things than that of Abel,' which called for wrath and vengeance; but this calls for peace and reconciliation. And no balm of Gilead so effectual to heal the wounded spirit. Therefore, as the woman believed she should be cured, if she but touched Jesus; and so she found it, according to her faith, Matth. ix. 21. 22. Thus do thou venture, Christian, by faith, to touch thy Saviour. Though thou art

sensible of thy filthiness, (as she was,) yet go to that 'fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness;' and he will not reject even the filthy, that come to be purged and healed; for he knows, that else it will never be done, though thou spend all thy living in seeking after other helpers. But thus shalt thou find the Lord Jesus with thy spirit, to receive thee, and to perfect what concerns thee. When therefore the conscience of sin pulls down thy soul, O look to mount Calvary, to see all thy debts discharged in thy dying Saviour! And hence will result the 'joy and peace in believing.' For what so saddens us as our sins? and what sins are those which the blood of the Son of God cannot cleanse us from?

Have respect then to the promise of God in him, and trust to find it performed to thyself. O betake thyself to Christ Jesus! saying, 'Lord, save me, or I perish.' One good look of thine to me is more worth than a world. O! what so reviving, as for thee to tell me, 'Thy sins are forgiven?' and for thee to say to my soul, 'I am thy salvation?' from thee is all the hope I have of it; for nothing in myself dare I rely upon; but to my Lord Jesus I look, and from him alone is all my expectation. I throw myself upon him, I leave myself with him; and 'though he slay me, yet will I trust in him:' and then thy faith will be counted to thee for righteousness; not because of its worth, as it is thy work; but be-

cause of his worthiness, whom it takes and appropriates to thy soul: for faith receives, but not deserves the benefit.

When no evidences then of thy worthiness do appear, (like the sun and stars hid in cloudy times,) yet faith will shew thee merit enough in thy Redeemer, and refer thee to him, for what thou findest wanting in thyself. Nor is this making too bold with him, when as he calls thee to him, and be sure will not invite thee, to deceive thee, but be better to thee than can be imagined by thee. ‘What time thou art afraid, then, O trust in him;’ and cheer up, after the example, Psal. xliii. 5. ‘Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.’ Nay, faith is the very band of union, to incorporate thee with thy Saviour, as a member of his body: and, as manducation and eating of thy meat makes it thy own, and converts it into thy substance, so believing in Jesus, eying him as the only Saviour, and acquiescing in him for all thy salvation, this is the ligament to fasten thee to him, and the means of conveyance to make him over to thee. And here is the only sure hold; for if thou abide not in him, thou wilt perish, John xv. 6. but ‘believing, thou shalt have life through his name,’ chap. xx. 31. Yea, ‘the Lord will save the righteous, (not because of the right-

teousness that is in them, but) 'because
' they trust in him,' Psal. xxxvii. 40. 'To
' whom sware he, that they should not enter
' into his rest, but to them that believed not?'
Heb. iii. 18. But ye are 'Christ's house, if
' ye hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing
' of hope firm to the end,' ver. 6. 'Cast not
' away thy confidence then, which has so great
' recompense of reward,' chap. x. 35. Who-
ever would put thee out of it, be no more
persuaded to part with thy faith, than to part
with thy Saviour, or thy soul. Be 'strong in
' faith, giving glory to God,' like the father
of the faithful, Rom. iv. 20. and let the world
see, that thou serveest the Lord, whom thou
darest trust.

And though thou art a miserable sinner,
he will be the more glorified to be thy Savi-
our. Though thou hast been guilty of great
sins before thy conversion, yea, and since too,
yet why did he bear the punishment of them, if
thou must bear it? Though thou wantest righ-
teousness to recommend thee, he has enough
to make thee accepted in him. And the ju-
stice of heaven is more satisfied in his suffer-
ing once, than in thy suffering for ever. Nor
is God only merciful, but 'just, in justify-
' ing the believers on Jesus,' Rom. iii. 26.
' faithful and just to forgive thee thy sins,'
1 John i. 9. And he that did cast an eye of
pity upon thee, even at the worst, be sure, will
not cast thee off, when it is grown better with

thee; as the Apostle argues, Rom. v. 10. 'If
' when we were enemies, we were reconciled
' to God by the death of his Son; much more
' being reconciled, we shall be saved by his
' life.' He that would not disdain thee, when
there was nothing of invitation in thee, will
he desert thee, after his own blessed work be-
gun in thee, invites and engages him to per-
fect what concerns thee? 'Wherefore shouldst
' thou so fear in the days of evil, when the i-
' niquity of thy heels shall compass thee a-
' bout?' Psal. xlix. 5. For God in Christ binds
himself in a covenant of grace and friendship
with all believers; and then the law of friend-
ship obliges to bear with failings and infirmi-
ties. So that when thou sinnest of frailty, and
art carried away with the force of temptations,
to do the evil which thou wouldst not; yea,
and when old reckonings and past sins regur-
gitate, and make new head against thee, thou
hast 'an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ
' the righteous, and he is the propitiation for
' thy sins,' 1 John ii. 2. So that the sinful e-
vil shall not be charged upon thee, when thou
dost not approve of it, nor consent to it, but
makest thy prayers and resistance against it.
That which thou bearest, then, as a burden,
and longest and strivest to get rid of, though
it annoy thee, it shall not destroy thee: for
Christ has once atoned, and still intercedeth
for such transgressors. And where any has

ought against them, he will place it on his own account, and so bring off and clear them.

Dost thou then confess thy sins, and endeavour to break them off, yet darcest not trust him to forgive them? Take heed; for thus thou thinkest worse of thy heavenly Lord, than thou wouldst do of any worthy friend upon earth, from whom thou wouldst be bold to expect such favour: whereas the blessed Saviour will not only equal, but exceed all the kindest friends that thou knowest in the world. O cast thyself then upon that mercy which lies open to all that are in misery! not because thou art worthy, but because thou hast an almighty and most gracious Redeemer, who distributes it freely: expect it from him, 'without money, and without price;' not because thou canst so well please him, but because mercy best pleases him, Mic. vii. 18. not for thy sake, but for his own, Is. xliii. 45. for the fulness of that love, which 'covers all the multitude of thy sins.' And whenever thou fallest into any of them, do but humble thy soul, and make conscience to rise again; and let thy heart cleave to nothing that God abhors, nor allow thyself to run on in any known way of wickedness; and then thy sins remaining, when not reset and cherished, shall not be imputed.

Thus let faith in Christ still be thy strong hold; but, by a conscientious carriage, be full of care to keep that faith in good heart; so to

keep up the good intelligence with heaven, by walking in thy integrity before the Lord. Nor harden thy heart against repentance, when sensible of thy offences; and let not that heart condemn thee, for shutting thy eyes against the light, which shews thee thy duty: for the bolder thou makest with sin, the less bold shalt thou be in thy God: and the better thou keep-est in with him, the more confidence shalt thou have towards him. Though none of thy holiness can merit heaven, yet he that has merited for thee, appoints thee in this way to walk thither. And though thou dost not 'establish 'thy own righteousness,' nor trust to any thing that thou dost, (not to any of thy duties, for more than belongs to them, i. e. thou must not trust to them for Christ's part;) yet because justified persons have somewhat more to do than trusting in Christ Jesus, let me shew, briefly, for thy satisfaction and establishment, (as such a one,) what God now requires, and will accept of thee.

If then thou dost not take up with the Antinomian conceit, to ask, What need I do any thing, when Christ has done all? yet dost thou run the sense of thy insufficiency to such an extreme, as to count the use of all thy endeavours but a mere impertinence, and askest, what is all my labour worth? or what will it signify, let me do whatever I can? Do not think that grace will be ever the less free, for all thy labouring; but though there is no me-

rit in it, yet grace may be justly with-holden for want of it. And still must thou be giving proof and evidence of thy believing, in thy working; and have a careful heart to know 'what the will of the Lord concerning thee 'is;' and put forth all the strength thou hast, to do the things which he commands.

Thus then the case stands:

He requires thee to mortify all thy lusts, and to break off all thy sins; to yield him entire obedience, and to abound in the fruits of righteousness. True.

But then, for all this, he allows thee time, and will supply thee with strength; and will accept thee, doing it in such manner, and by such degrees, as thy frailty will admit. And he does not expect, that all on a sudden thou shouldst shake off every corruption, but that thou shouldst labour to subdue them, according to that measure of strength thou hast received. And when thou layest thy designs, and bendeest thy forces against the sins that hang upon thee, though thou art not presently rid of them, he will accept thee.

And though thou canst not quite banish the corruption from dwelling in thee, nor get the full and perfect conquest over it; yet, if thou warrest against it, to prevent the reign of it, and wilt not yield thyself a vassal to it; but whenever thou art carried captive by it, thou groanest under the bondage, and strug-

gleft to regain thy freedom, thou shalt be accepted.

Thy Lord does not look for unfinning righteousness now from thee; for if all were so right and well with thee, of what use then would the Saviour be to thee? Hadst thou a full sufficiency in thyself, there would be an end then of leaning by faith upon him. He expects not that thou shouldst punctually answer all that ever the law demands; but that thou shouldst approve his law, and have a will present to do it, and desire and strive still better to fulfil it. And if thou hast a sincere love and respect to all his commands, though thou failest in the performance of many particulars, he will accept thee, and take thy fulfilling of his law (*καὶ ἐπιείκειαν*) with a gospel mitigation, and not exact it (*καὶ ἀκριβείαν*) according to the legal rigour.

He would have thee fruitful in good works, and to 'let thy light shine before men,' that they may see them. Yet he expects not now the harvest, but the first-fruits of goodness; and stands not so much on the actions, as the affections; not on the perfection of the work done, but the readiness of mind, and alacrity of the heart that it comes from.

The righteousness inherent that he calls for, is not an absolute freedom from evil, or a perfection of obedience; no, but the confessing of thy unrighteousness, and bewailing thy sinfulness, and longing and labouring more and

more to get out of it, and to rise to a more eminent height of newness of life, and to fill up all the wants and imperfections, by faith and affiance, in the most holy Saviour. And then, though I dare not tell thee, (as some do,) that Christ has merited this for thee, that thou shouldst be justified by thy own doings, and inherent righteousness; yet I dare assure thee, that imperfect services shall be taken in good part from thee, when thou art by faith interested in the perfect Mediator and Redeemer; for it is through his death, that the God of heaven reconciles us, and so ‘presents us holy, and unblameable, and unreprouceable in his sight;’ (not upon the impossible condition, that we never any more do amiss; but) ‘if we continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel,’ Col. i. 21, 22, 23.

Put forth thyself then to do as thou canst, and that will give thee a ‘testimony of conscience,’ which will be thy ‘rejoicing, in simplicity and godly sincerity, to have had thy conversation in the world,’ 2 Cor. i. 12. And when thy heart condemns thee not for any wickedness allowed in it, then shalt thou have ‘confidence towards God,’ and find his kingdom within thee to be not only ‘righteousness, but peace and joy in the holy Ghost.’ So that thou mayest take comfort even in thy personal righteousness, as it is an evidence of grace, and of thy implantation in the living

vine. And thus 'proving thy own work, 'thou mayest have rejoicing in thyself, and 'not in another,' Gal. vi. 4. unless it be in him, that has made thee to differ, and altered thee so much for the better; yea, in him, who (according to that new covenant which thou art under) has promised to 'put his law,' not only 'in thy mind, (to think of it,) but 'in thy heart,' (to delight in it;) and 'cause 'thee to walk in his statutes, and to keep his 'judgments, and do them,' Ezek. xxxvi. 27. and (for what thou failest) to be 'merciful to 'thy unrighteousness and thy sins, and remember thy iniquities no more,' Heb. viii. 10, 12. Thou hast encouragement, then, to go on cheerfully with thy duty, though it be attended with frailty, and 'delight to do the 'will of God,' according to the proportion of thy ability.

But having done thy best, yet trust to nothing that thou dost, nor mistake thy way for thy journey's end. No; let thy Saviour alone still have the honour to be thy refuge and fortress, thy tower of defence, and rock of salvation, where thou layest up all thy hope, and on which thou hast all thy dependence. Nor think it enough to imitate them, who make him no other amends, for sharing his honour, in satisfying for themselves, but only to shut up their collects, *per Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum*, as the acute Pemble perstrings the Romish faith. It is not such a formality

that will pay him his due glory. But even when thou doest the best service to him, yet must thou repose all thy hope and confidence in him. And as thou must not so depend upon his mercy, as to neglect the care of thy duty; so neither have such dependence on any of thy duties, as to cast away thy trust in his mercies. Only give duty and obedience their due place and office under thy Lord Redeemer; but ascribe not the work and glory of Christ to any the best of thy works; set them not in competition with him, much less in opposition to him, to make them the price of redemption, or meritorious of thy salvation. O never think to set up such a righteousness of works, as shall satisfy the justice of heaven, without being beholden to the satisfaction of Christ Jesus; but, humbly bewailing thy own unrighteousness, plead the righteousness of thy Saviour, as that wherein thou wouldst be found, and by which thou resolvest ever to abide.

For (according to the Belgic confession)
“ we shall straight be overwhelmed with the
“ majesty of God, if we present ourselves before it, trusting either to ourselves, or to
“ any other creature; and there will be nothing but doubting and wavering, and the
“ conscience always staggering, and in torment, without an entire reliance on the satisfaction of Jesus Christ.”

And so the church of Bohemia, “ Christ

“alone is our perfection and fulfilling of
“the law, our life, and our righteousness;
“and whosoever receive him by faith, and re-
“pose the trust of their souls in him, have
“all their sins washed away in his blood;
“so that after they need not fear condemna-
“tion.”

And the council of Auspurg does not mis-
call it, “Pharisaic blindness,” to dislike the
doctrine of “justification by faith;” which
extols the honour of Christ, “offers sweet and
“sure consolation to godly minds, teaches
“the true knowledge of God’s mercy, and
“produces his right worship and eternal life.”

And accordingly have all those Protestant
churches in the world, the confessions of whose
faith I have seen, signified their sense of this
doctrine; a doctrine that quells our fears, and
raises our souls, from jealousy of the Lord’s
mercy, to “rejoice in hope of his glory;”
from groaning under ‘the body of this death,’
to sing praise unto God, that gives us ‘the
‘victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.’

But they that set men to dig justification
out of the mines of their own righteousness,
push them upon an impossible task, and stretch
conscience upon a tormenting rack, to sting
and wound, without offering any true ease
and healing, proposing such a method of ju-
stification wherein it can never be effected;
and yet insisting peremptorily upon it, that
so it must be done; whipping and spurring

poor creatures to carry mountains, for which, when they see their utter insufficiency, thus their peace is ruined, and there they are left in doleful distress and desperate agony, and so frightened from reliance on the blessed Jesus, that they scarce dare turn their heads to look that way.

O miserable comforters, that would drive us out of this resort! Wretched Christians, that so derogate from the merits of Christ, as if they were not fit to be relied on! which are indeed the only stay for a poor sinful soul to take hold of, if ever that soul would have peace, and be at rest. God knows what sorry keepers of the peace we are, and how ill it is preserved when lying only upon us, who are every day breaking with him, and flying out against him, after he has been reconciled to us. It is his peace alone that 'keeps our hearts,' Phil. iv. 7. And 'in me ye shall have peace,' saith our Lord, John xvi. 33. not in all the best that ever you can do yourselves. And therefore it is in Christ Jesus that we must 'rejoice, and not have any confidence in the flesh,' Phil. iii. 3. nor be so hardy, as to cast ourselves upon a trial, by that law, which will for certain condemn us: for our sinning against the law has not freed us from it; and where-ever we come short of obedience to the whole law, we are guilty of sin, and liable to the curse. Nor can we through virtue of the gospel-covenant be ju-

stified by our personal righteousness, because there is no less perfect righteousness required in the gospel, than in the law, the same holy rule being still in full force. And if we are justified by inherent righteousness, then are we still under the covenant of works; for if it be of works, it is no more of grace. Nay, such as make obedience and perseverance the condition of our justification, offer that which can never be accomplished till our death. And so no justification (according to them) is to be had in this life. And then, (in the judgment of our church,) neither can one good work ever be done in this life: for we are taught, (Art. 12.) that "works are the fruits of faith, "and follow after justification;" and (Art. 13.) that "works done before justification, are "so far from being good and pleasing to God, "that they have the nature of sin." And if justification be only a reversion, and suspended for term of life, where then is the peace and joy which believers have in it, as a done thing already past? for so the Apostle speaks of it, Rom. v. 1. 'Being justified by faith, 'we have peace with God.' And if we are justified by faith in our Saviour's blood, what works then are joined with that? For what is faith in his blood, but a depending upon the meritorious effusion of that precious blood, for the gratuitous remission of our sins? And if God 'impute righteousness without works,' Rom. iv. 6. then we may indeed rejoice and

triumph in the blessed effects of his grace, already wrought in us, which is the true ingenuous spirit of the gospel, opposite to that servile spirit, which some are at so much pains to bring believers under.

And when God in mercy (with regard to our necessity, and for the relief of our impotency) hath given out the subsidiary command, provided for our lapsed state, that we should 'believe on the name of his Son,' and so believe unto righteousness, and to salvation;) how do they slight their souls, as well as their peace, and throw away their salvation, together with their consolation, that make light of the only Mediator, and dispute and cavil themselves out of their faith, and make but a jest of believing in Christ, to the saving of the soul! O what madness, to reject the only sure hold in the world, and stand off from the only safe refuge, where rest is to be found for the soul!

Men may crack of their righteousness, good conscience, and innocence; and well if such as boast most of it, had more to shew for it. We plead as much as ever they can do for it. And therefore our doctrine can bring no one under any danger for the want of it. But then if it be charged upon us as our crime, that we caution men from trusting to it, we are willing to bear that burden, and wish that they do not bring a far heavier upon themselves, whose turn nothing will serve, but they must

work their own justification out of it. One would think their proud opinion should need no other confutation, but to hear conscience tell them their own, what they have done, and what they do deserve. But if nothing save the tribunal of God will silence them, thither we must remit them. And when it comes to the putting to for life and death eternal, I doubt not but the best then will soon have enough of it, and be glad to betake themselves to another plea. All sophistical wrangling for the merit of works will be forever dashed, and struck dead at that judgment-seat, where will be no trifling or collusion of words, but all shall be searched and tried to the bottom, before that glorious Majesty, whose brightness (as one of our first reformers represents it) “darkens the sun, whose
“strength melts down the mountains, whose
“anger shakes the earth, whose purity makes
“even the heavens look sullied, whose wisdom catches the subtle in their craftiness,
“whose justice the angels themselves cannot
“stand before, whose wrath once kindled,
“burns to the lowest hell, and to the utmost
“eternity.” O let the best men that ever lived, offer their lives and actions to be scanned before this most worthy, but dreadful, Judge eternal; and then tell me, if Eliphaz said too much, Job xv. 14, 15, 16. ‘What is
‘man, that he should be clean? and he which
‘is born of a woman, that he should be-right-

‘teous? Behold, he putteth no trust in his
‘faints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his
‘fight. How much more abominable and filthy
‘thy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?’

Though men may now cavil it out with their fellows, yet all the defences and confidences, how will they vanish at the presence of their glorious Maker, when he comes to judge the world? And when the last trumpet shall sound, they will be roused out of the fine golden dreams of their own riches and righteousness, and be confounded even at the very best worth of their own, upon which they were wont so much to value themselves, and not backward then to make David’s confession, Psal. cxix. 120. ‘My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments.’ And may not this stain the pride of all glorying in any thing that we have done, or can do, and humble the lofty looks, and bring down the haughtiness of man, that the ‘Lord alone will be exalted in that’ dreadful ‘day;’ and to him alone, and not to any man, shall be all the glory of the salvation of every one that is saved?

Almighty Judge, how shall poor mortals brook
Thy dreadful look,
Able a heart of iron to appall,
When thou shalt call
For every man’s peculiar book!

What others mean to do, I know not well;
But I hear tell,
That some will turn thee to some leaves therein
So void of sin,
That they in merit shall excell.

But I resolve, when thou shalt call for mine,
That to decline,
And thrust a testament into thy hand;
Let that be scann'd,
There thou shalt find, my faults are thine.

HERB.

And if any still think they can stand well enough upon their own legs, and are for 'establishing their own righteousness,' O Christians, do not ye count it a disparagement to imitate the spouse of Christ that is represented, Cant. viii. 5. 'coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved.' But as your weakness makes you all to need the prop, so will you shew your wisdom in making use of it. And take it not for a thing of indifference, but your bounden duty, when this is 'the command of God, that you should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ,' 1 John iii. 23. O bless his name, that he has given you his Son to believe in, and obliged you to that, which is your only sure support, and everlasting consolation. And let no disputers or scorers abroad in the world, nor any unworthiness or failings at home in your-

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selves, ever pluck you from this fastness, nor wrench you out of this fiducial affiance in the Lord your righteousness and your Redeemer. But look to the blessed Jesus, and depend all upon him; and hope for life only from his death; and trust to his merits and righteousness alone, for the pardon of all your sins, for the whole of your acceptance with God, and all that ever you would have to do you good, both here and for ever.

And thus 'submitting to the righteousness of God,' and reposing your confidence in the Son of God, your expectation shall not perish; you shall not be ashamed of your hope, but shall believe, to the quieting of your minds, and to the saving of your souls.

*Collect for Fifth Sunday after Epiph.' and
part of Sexagesa.*

O Lord, who see'st that we put not our trust in any thing that we do, we beseech thee, to keep thy church and household continually in thy true religion, that they who do lean only upon the hope of thy heavenly grace, may evermore be defended by thy mighty power, through Jesus Christ our Lord. A-

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